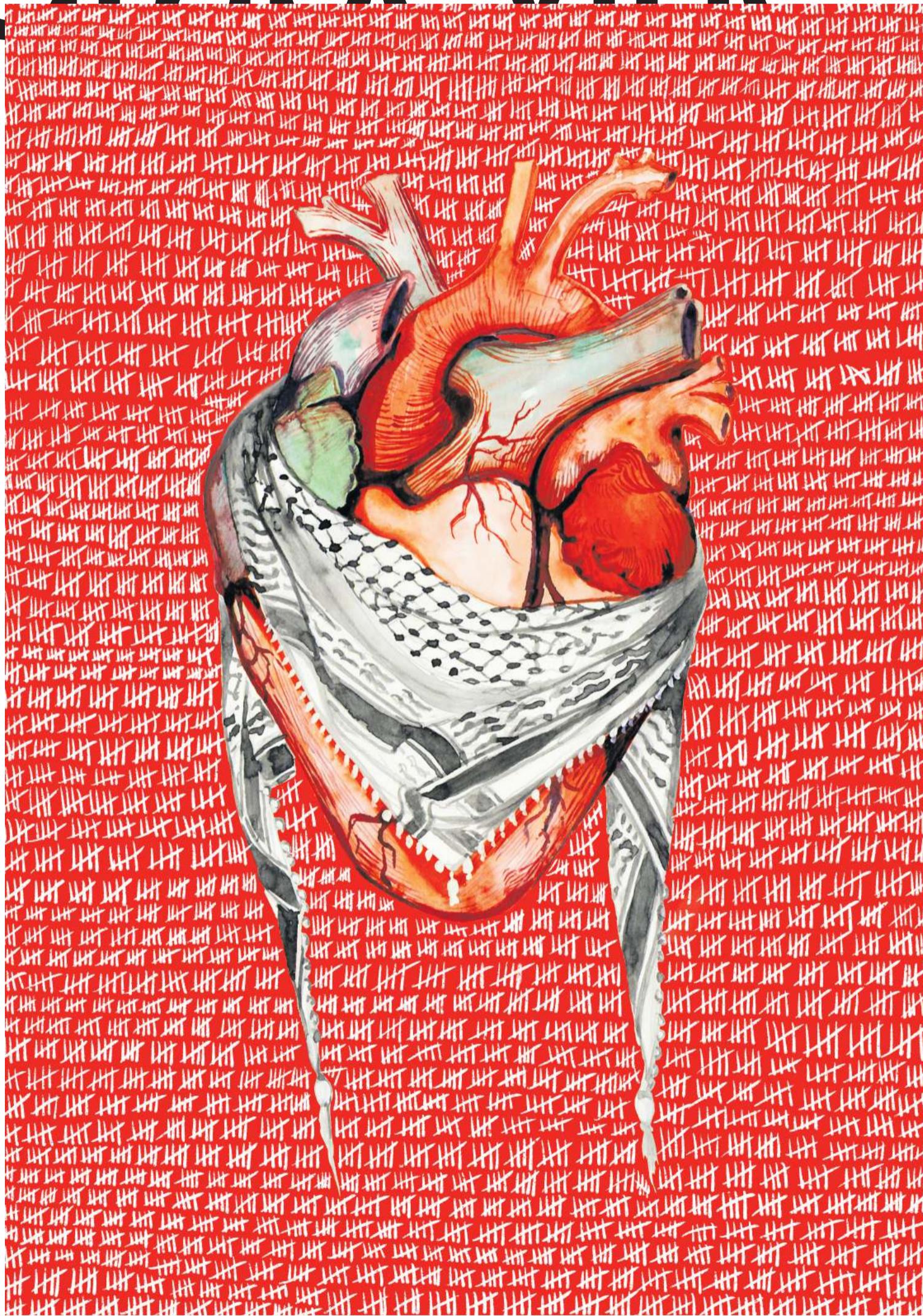


The Reykjavík Granevine



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Volume 21

Issue 06 2024

Best before May 31

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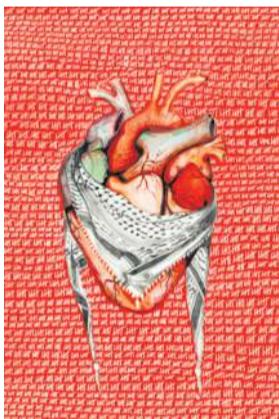
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On the Cover

Since Israel launched its full-scale attack on Gaza in response to Hamas' incursion into Israel on October 7, 2023, more than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli Defence Forces, falling victim to the tens of thousands of bombs dropped on the enclave or the full-blown famine resulting from Israel's use

of starvation as a weapon of war. A tally of roughly 8,000 is depicted on this issue's cover illustration – a fraction of the Palestinians murdered by Israel in the past seven months. Palestinians are not numbers. Children, women and other innocent civilians are not collateral damage. This has to stop.

COVER ARTWORK: Julia Mai Linnéa Maria

Editorial Enough. Stop.

WORDS Catharine Fulton,
Editor in Chief

How many dead children is too many dead children? There's a sentence I never thought I would be thinking on a daily basis, let alone typing into my computer for publication.

So, how many? How many more have to be slaughtered in the name of colonialism before global powers stop providing Israel with the weapons being used in their heinous actions?

When I was a new mother, I would be struck with momentary intermittent dread at the thought of something happening to my baby in their sleep. The thought would be a chaotic mixture of panic and sorrow, and the deep, gut wrenching, soul destroying sense of loss it would be if that beautiful feeling of their little body in my arms would be reduced to a memory. I would die. I would crumble. Even the imagined death of my child made me certain that I am not strong enough to endure such agony. I am still certain of that.

Now, I am having an increasingly difficult time enduring the thought of the agony I know every parent, every child, every person in Palestine is feeling as they embrace the lifeless body of their loved one for what they know will be the very last time. It is an experience that Palestinians have endured more than 35,000 times over the past seven months as Israel inflicts disproportionate pain and carnage on the population of Gaza in response to Hamas' incursion into Israel on October 7, 2023.

If Israel's actions are in a bid to see their hostages freed, deploying bunker busting bombs to decimate the areas where hostages may be held is a twisted way to go about it. If this entire genocidal affair inflicted by an occupier against the occupied is in the name of eliminating Hamas, then what does Israel have to say for the rampant violence of illegal Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank?

Stop. Enough. No more. Scream it in the streets. Disrupt daily life. Bring institutions to a halt. Use your voice, use your power, use your freedom to do something. Anything.

Make it stop now.

Free Palestine. ■

Contributors



CATHERINE MAGNÚSDÓTTIR

Catherine studies culture and literature in Iceland and came to the Grapevine for the internship but ended up freelancing for the magazine. When she's not trying to reconnect with her Icelandic roots, she's usually watching video essays or attempting to finally come up with that one good story idea that she can actually finish writing.



JOANA FONTINHA

Joana is an Aries baby expressing her soul through photography. She's been obsessed with Icelandic culture since her teens, so much that at 20 she threw herself headfirst on a plane to her long-time dream country, Iceland. Driven, energetic and unable to be still, she clumsily moves like a flash and suffers from a serious fast-talking condition.



JÓHANNES BJARKI BJARKASON

Jóhannes Bjarki is a Reykjavík local, straight out of Grafarvogur. Having been active as the frontman of the post-punk band Skoffin and in the post-dreifing art collective, Jóhannes is fascinated by the Icelandic music scene. Among his interests are politics, history and pop culture.



IRYNA ZUBENKO

Iryna is a Ukrainian journalist working at the cross-section of media and technology for the past five years. While still figuring out what to do in life, Iryna's love of travelling, unspoiled nature and Scandi design has brought her to Reykjavík. One day she'll write a non-fiction book.



REX BECKETT

Rex Beckett has been a fixture in the Reykjavík culture scene for over a decade as a longtime music/art writer and as former synthpunk diva Rex Pistols. They are currently working on a series delving into the influence of Garfield on queer millennials.



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What The News!?

Is This The End Of Airbnb In Reykjavík?

A selection of stories making the rounds in recent weeks

WORDS The Reykjavík Grapevine

IMAGE Adobe Stock

capital area.

"This legislation demarcates residential and commercial housing when it comes to accommodation, focusing on the actual utilisation of housing. That is why it is no longer possible to purchase a residential apartment in an urban area and rent it out as a guesthouse longer than 90 days, like has happened in downtown Reykjavík where even entire apartment blocks are transformed into hotels," said Minister of Culture and Business Lilja Dögg Alfreðsdóttir.

THE VOLCANO IS DEAD (LONG LIVE THE VOLCANO)

The eruption that began March 16 between Hagafell and Stóra Skóglf was declared over on May 9. Having erupted for 54 days, this latest eruption was the longest-running of those being fed by the magma reservoir beneath Svartsengi. Other eruptions in the same system over the past several months lasted mere hours to a few days.

The Icelandic Meteorological Office remains vigilant, though, as magma continues to accumulate beneath Svartsengi at the same rate as prior to and during the eruption. They

warn that the likelihood of another eruption starting remains high and warning could be very short.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS DEPORTED

On May 13, Icelandic authorities deported four asylum applicants to Nigeria via Germany. The people, whose applications were denied by the Directorate of Immigration (ÚTL), have lived in Iceland for four to six years.

Three of the deportees, all Nigerian women, are survivors of human trafficking and sought refuge in Iceland on those grounds. Lawyer Helgi Þorsteinsson Silva pleaded for authorities to delay the deportations on medical grounds as his client, Blessing Uzoma Newton, suffers from an abdominal tumour. ÚTL denied the case.

Activist group No Borders Iceland protested the actions at Keflavík Airport on the eve of May 13. "We're here tonight so this doesn't happen silently," said No Borders activist Ragnheiður Freyja Kristinsdóttir told local media. ■

DOWN WITH AIRBNB!

New legislation bans owners of hospitality businesses from renting out long-term accommodation defined as residential housing. The Icelandic government announced the law on their website on May 3.

Real estate owners can still lease out their homes for a maximum of 90 days per year for a maximum of two million ISK. Business licences will only be granted to commercial housing, or if the rented unit is located rurally, for example farm guest-houses.

The legislation is a part of the government's efforts to increase the supply of residential housing in the



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Do Shit What's The Deal With Labour Unions?

The Útlendingur's ongoing guide to getting shit done

WORDS Catharine Fulton
IMAGE Art Bicnick

If you are working in Iceland you're likely aware of the existence of labour unions. In fact, one of the first on-boarding questions you're likely to be asked by a new employer is "what union are you with?" as they'll need to direct monthly dues to the right place. But what are unions, what purpose do they serve in Iceland and what benefits do workers have for being members?

"Unions were originally created by activists that banded together to fight collectively for better working rights," says Gabriel Benjamin, an emergency medical dispatcher at 112 and a board member of the VR trade union. While trade unions today have an appearance of being tame and civil, all of the rights we now enjoy have come from this primordial struggle – the union spirit is still strong."

As Gabriel explains, the role of Iceland's trade unions is to "safeguard the rights of its members as well

as to reach collective wage agreements that determine minimum rights in the labour market. Daily trade unions," he continues, "provide their members with information and assistance and help them make sure rights such as minimum wages, sickness rights, termination notice, and contracts are being enforced correctly. Unions also come to the aid of those who should be members and are exploited in the workplace, such as victims of human trafficking."

While in other countries "union" is a bad word and unionising is optional from one workplace to another, here in Iceland there is more of an obligation to be a dues-paying union member. According to law 55/1980, every employer is required to dock a portion of their employees' payslips to pay into union dues and the respective pension fund. "While individuals can opt to not be full members of the union, they are still required by law to pay the appropriate union dues because they enjoy the benefits of the appropriate collective wage agreement," Gabriel explains.

Beyond the benefits of having a body negotiating wage increases, the benefits of being a member of an Icelandic union are many – even

if it may not seem like it for those unfamiliar with the system. Employees can reach out to their unions for advice on potential mistreatment or conditions in their workplace, or turn to their union to dip into the sickness fund in the event of a long-term illness that hinders one's ability to work.

"When rights are not being honoured the unions can represent their members, going so far as litigation against the employer if no agreement is reached," Gabriel says. "These services are usually free of charge for the union member."

Unions also extend such benefits as funding for courses, subsidising the purchase of subscription eyewear, and offer deals on summerhouse rentals and possibly even flight vouchers (depending on which union you're a member of).

"I encourage you to look into your local union, reach out to them if you have any questions or want to learn about your rights, offer suggestions and feedback, and take part," says Gabriel. "We need more immigrants on our councils and on our boards. We need your ideas and energy. We need renewed solidarity, because nobody can do this by themselves – the union makes us strong." ■



Word Of The Issue The Infinite Uses Of Jæja

The Grapevine's guide to sounding Icelandic, one word at a time

WORDS Catharine Fulton
IMAGE Alisa Kalyanova

banter seems to be petering out – dropping an elongated jæja at such a time is equivalent to saying "well, this has been nice, but I'm about ready to move on from this chat."

Uttered with a slightly stern tone of voice and jæja serves as a warning to Icelandic children that you've just about had it with their shenanigans. Said with a sense of purpose while standing up and those same children (or any nearby adults) will know it's time to get a move on or at least that the person saying the jæja is about to skedaddle.

It's one of those adaptable little filler words that'll come in handy no matter the situation so long as you apply the right emotion or intonation to it. If you're feeling really done with a situation or conversation, say jæja on the inhale to let your collocutor know it. Maybe they'll even reply with a jæja of their own.

Jæja, that's about all there is to say about that. ■

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On The Fringes

This One's For The Horse Girlies!

Saddle up and enjoy the ride at Hestasnilld

WORDS Catherine Magnúsdóttir
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

Giddyup and take the reins, it's time to talk about horses! Iceland famously has its own breed of small but sturdy equines and many sites will offer tours on horseback to make you feel like you and Buttercup really can be one with the wind! But what if you want to pursue your equestrian endeavours for more than one afternoon? In order to appease the inner horse girl in us all, I have done some rigorous research regarding riding in Reykjavík (horse back, specifically) and spoke to Sonja Noack, teacher at the riding school Hestasnilld.

I've always loved horses," Sonja tells me. "Even though I actually fell off the first time I sat on a horse and got a concussion! But I kept going and didn't want to stop, despite the rough start. I went to the stable every day and helped out in exchange for lessons after school. It was and is everything for me." Sonja came to Iceland from Switzerland in 2005, initially to work on a farm for seven months but then moved here permanently in 2008. After training in Hólar to become a riding teacher and horse trainer, she eventually started her own program in 2022.

Sonja teaches people of all ages and all year round, making sure to involve her riding students in the process of caring for and preparing the horses. She emphasises that she wants to create the opportuni-

ty for anyone to pursue horseback riding. "So many kids and adults don't have the opportunity to ride because nobody in their family has horses, which I always thought was so sad," Sonja says. "Normally you just have the summer courses here for kids – what about the kids who don't have relatives with horses or riding experience? The ones that really want to learn to ride, pursue it as a sport and not just sit on a horse in the summer. I started with private lessons for adults and eventually, in 2022 it became more of a riding school."

Working in smaller groups on a weekly basis throughout the year, Sonja helps her students form a connection to the living creatures they are working with. Should they ever foster a horse or even have one of their own, they can first learn about the care and responsibility

that comes with such an endeavour. So far, Sonja says, her focus has been on kids that are somewhat familiar with the concept of riding on a horse and want to learn more. Although there are also courses for parents and toddlers between two and five years old, which serve more on the connection than the technique level. For the adults, she primarily offers private lessons. All students start learning from a beginner level to advanced, aka Knapamerki 1-5. This education also involves theoretical as well as practical tests. So, if you want to pursue horse riding seriously this is worth looking into.

"It's important to me for my students to learn that the horse comes first, not you and your fun," Sonja says.

The draw of the hobby, according to Sonja, lies first and foremost in

the connection you can form with a horse – and even in gaining a better understanding of yourself, your body and managing conditions like anxiety, for example. "You need to take charge of the horse, show that they can trust you," Sonja explains. "It's a whole process to build up, they are sensitive to your feelings, to stress, fear. Through that you learn control over yourself. Body language is very important. It also forces you to be present in the moment. You have to focus on yourself and the horse. You feel the energy of the horse, how fast you can go. It's one of the best feelings I know and it's so fun to give that to others."

Time to saddle up my equestrian enthusiasts. We ride at dawn! ■

Learn more about the available riding programs at hestasnilld.is



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Side Hustle

Seven Years Of Pizza

Einar Águst Þorvaldsson is sailing the seas and serving the pies

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

Einar Águst Þorvaldsson juggles life as a fisherman on a ship sailing from Grindavík and working as a shift manager at Domino's Pizza. At just 19, he's driven by the desire to enter the local real estate market. "The fishing industry pays well, but living in Iceland is expensive," he says. "I'm trying to use every advantage I can to be able to buy a house or apartment as soon as possible."

Einar Águst Þorvaldsson, 19, a member of deck crew at Valdimar ship

I started working at Domino's when I was 13, combining it with school. I was studying engineering and to get my licence, I needed experience on the job, so I got a job on a ship. When I started my main job, I kept the job at Domino's because of the extra pay, but I eventually reduced my hours. The way the fishing industry works, I often have one or two weeks off. That's too much of a break. So, when I go home every two weeks, I can take some shifts at Domino's to have something to do.

THE BOSS OF HIS OWN SCHEDULE

The good thing about Domino's is that they have a group chat and sometimes people want to get rid of shifts, so it's really easy for me to pick them up. I just talk to my store

manager and ask him to put me on shifts every time I have a vacation from the ship. It works together really well, mostly because Domino's is a flexible employer. Sometimes if I come home early from the ship, I'll pick up shifts at Domino's the same evening.

I work mostly in one Domino's location, but sometimes I travel. About 30% of my shifts are travelling and 70% are in my main shop. It's a little bit difficult because I live in Selfoss and there's only one Domino's there. So if I want to travel, I need to drive all the way to Reykjavík.

UPS AND DOWNS OF THE JOB

The best thing about this side job is that I find it fun. I really enjoy coming to Domino's and working there. Working on New Year's Day is always memorable, or, for example, last summer when Domino's was celebrating its 30th anniversary in Iceland. Especially since I was not supposed to be working that day, but I got a phone call at 18:00 saying, "Hey, Einar, can you come help us?" It was all hands on deck. That's the biggest day I've ever worked in the last three years.

I don't like closing the store and maybe working until 1:00, 2:00 or even 3:00 in the morning. I like being able to come home and go to sleep at a regular time.

After seven years, I still like pizza – I like it too much. There are times when I eat pizza three or four times a week. When I'm working, I get

food at Domino's, so I don't need to spend money on it. As I like to say, free food is the best food.

PIZZA RAGE

It's very surprising how angry people can get over pizza. Because I'm a shift manager, when an angry customer comes in, I'm usually the first person to try to talk to them and deal with their problems. Usually, if a pizza is five to 10 minutes late, I offer them a free soda as an apology. That works really well and that's like an official Domino's guideline – just say you're sorry and let them speak. We make three hundred orders every day at just one shop, so of course at least one customer is going to be unhappy with something.

One time, we had an extremely angry drunk man come in. He asked for a pizza. I said, "Of course," told him the price and that it'll be ready in 10 minutes because it needs seven minutes in the oven. He came back two minutes later, right after I put the pizza in the oven. He was very angry, shouting, "Where's my pizza? Where's my pizza?" He just wanted his pizza right away. He even went into the employee area in the back to look for it. So, I took this pizza out of the oven, after just one minute or so there, and gave it to him. Because he wanted this pizza right now, then he can get it right now. After a long day, I was really pissed and this was the solution – he wants his pizza, let's just give him this pizza.

He was too drunk to notice, just took the pizza and left. We didn't receive any complaints. ■

FELDUR

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The Food Cellar was founded in May 2016 and is now 8 years old. For that reason, we have created this "compilation album".

We have compiled our all time favourite dishes that we feel stand out from more than 150 dishes that have been created over the years. All of these dishes have a personal meaning for us and we are truly honored to be able to share them with our guests in this way.

The Food Cellar has been through a lot in the past 8 years and a lot has changed. The essence of the restauranthas however always remained the same - good food, good music and good service.

For us, food and music are an inseparable whole that forms our slogan

"Food for the body, music for the soul"

and so we thought it would be ideal to offer this special birthday menu in the form of a six song compilation album from us to you.



Under the Sea – Samuel E. Wright
Scallops – cauliflower, chili, hazelnuts

Smoke on the Water – Deep Purple
Smoked Arctic Charr – horseradish, spiced bread, skyr

Born in the USA – Bruce Springsteen
Beef Ribs – mac 'n' cheese, parmesan, mushrooms

Bragðarefir – Prins Pólio
Tuna Tataki and Tiger Prawn – estragon, egg, ponzu, wasabi

Fjöllin hafa vakað – Egó
Lamb – celeriac, fennell

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Fun & Games

Exploring The Island Of Winds

Parity's ambitious adventure game casts a distinctly Icelandic spell

WORDS John Rogers
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

Iceland's bleakly picturesque landscape has become a popular backdrop in the last two decades. From Hollywood sci-fi, to crime literature, music videos and prestige TV, the country's gleaming glaciers and gnarled lavascape have become ubiquitous in the popular imagination.

The same cannot be said for video games – the interactive medium that has become, by some measures, the world's most popular form of entertainment. To date, only a handful of major games have turned to Iceland's wild nature as their setting.

Reykjavík-based game studio Parity is seeking to change that with Island Of Winds – an ambitious adventure game set in a distinctly Icelandic wilderness. "We initially thought of making a game set in Russia," says

Maria Guðmundsdóttir, the game's creative director and Parity's CEO. "But we decided to work with what we know and set it in Iceland."

REIMAGINING ICELAND

The game's world was originally based on Ísafjarðardjúp in the Westfjords, but Parity quickly found the topography impractical. "We tried using a height map of that area, but it's so steep, there wasn't enough surface area to explore," María laughs. "You'd be clinging onto the mountainside like a sheep. So we decided to use different parts of Iceland as inspiration."

Instead, the game's seven biomes became more of an Iceland mood board. "There's a glacier lagoon, a lava area and a fjord," says María. "One area is based on the Ásbyrgi canyon, reworked to better guide the player. We've also used basalt and black sand and sea stacks, like at Dyrhólaey."

LEARNING NEW SPELLS

Set in the 17th century, the game tells the tale of Brynhildur, a witch

who returns to the fjord one day to find her clan is nowhere to be found. "She sets out on a journey to find them," says María. "You'll learn spells and skills, and de-hex cursed areas. It's a balance of story, exploration, puzzles and spellcasting."

While the game's story is fiction, it touches on some gruesome chapters of Iceland's history. "We thought about making a game set in the Viking era, or in Norse mythology, but those have been used elsewhere," María explains. "So we settled on the witch hunt era of the 1600s. It was a harsh time. There was the law of 'big judgement' – you could kill someone for having a baby out of wedlock and drown someone for being a witch. Island of Winds is about healing and helping, but it's set against this dark time."

EMPATHY ENCOUNTERS

Like most third person action-adventure games, Island of Winds' gameplay includes combat – in this case with creatures from Iceland's rich mythology roaming the land. But the game has an unusual approach to killing enemies.

"Life at this time was harsh, so the player can use spells to kill hostile creatures," María says. "But you aren't rewarded for it. When an animal's health is down to 20%, they will stop attacking you and return to their home. You have the option to deal the final blow right there, in front of their offspring. It's a brutal choice to make. We call these 'empathy encounters.'

The same is true of the bosses found in each of the seven areas. Rather than facing them in battle, the player engages with them in different ways. "In every level there's a five-stage boss encounter," says María. "But you help them, rather than fighting them."

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

The game also contains a range of optional activities and side-quests that encourage the player to explore all the corners of its world. "It's a linear game, with high level missions to complete and open the next level," says María. "But there's a lot of secondary content that lets you go off the beaten track. You can find letters that people have left behind and

there's an artefact system where you can examine objects related to the era and get extra treats for exploring."

The game's gentle exploration and empathetic approach to confrontation was designed to create a more flowing, thoughtful gameplay experience. "When designing these systems, we thought about how the player will feel and how the game will sit with them afterwards," says María.

Asked what she thinks players might feel specifically, María pauses, seemingly lost in thought for a moment. "I hope they will feel a little bit of emptiness when the game is over," she finally says. "I think there's a balance of sadness and happiness. There's some sadness in Brynhildur's story, that you will learn by playing. And I hope that, in the end, people will find closure." ■

Island Of Winds is planned for an early 2025 release. You can wishlist the game now on Steam and find more info at islandofwinds.com.

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Free Palestine

It's Time To Shake The World

Exploring the Free Palestine movement in Iceland

WORDS Catharine Fulton
IMAGES Joana Fontinha

points with each clash with the State of Israel – of which there have been many. Now, more than 220 days into the current iteration of violence in Gaza, the world has watched as more than 35,000 Palestinians – more than 15,000 of them children – have been slaughtered by Israel while trapped in the enclave that has oft been referred to as the world's largest open-air prison.

While the Israel Defense Forces bombard Gaza with bunker buster bombs supplied by the United States in what they claim is an attempt to rid the region of Hamas – an act of revenge for the group's October 7 incursion into Israel – Zionist Israeli settlers have ramped up their attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank and blocked humanitarian aid routes into Gaza, where the United Nations confirms a "full-blown famine" has taken hold as a direct result of Israel's blockade. Despite a legally-binding ruling issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on January 26, 2024, that Israel must "take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian aid," and to report back on its compliance to the specific measures "within one month," Israel has continued to herd displaced, injured and malnourished Palestinians around Gaza while dropping bombs, blocking aid and, in at least eight cases, targeting humanitarian groups working in the region who had notified Israel of their movements through established lines of deconfliction.

Anti-war and pro-Palestine movements have erupted around the world as news reports and images of the carnage in Gaza splash across our screens every hour of every day, and as Israel continues to flout international law even as the ICJ says is "plausible" Israel is committing

genocide in Gaza.

People have taken to the streets to demand a permanent ceasefire and the freedom of the Palestinian people from the apartheid rule under which they live. Iceland is no exception.

Though the Icelandic government has been toeing the line of the United States over the past seven months, in 2011 Iceland was the first western nation to recognise Palestinian statehood. Displaying the humanity Alþingi appears to be lacking, Icelanders have participated in more than 50 demonstrations and solidarity marches since October, calling for the government to cut diplomatic ties with Israel and invoke sanctions.

The Grapevine spoke with three people who have made a mark on the local anti-war movement.

THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE

It has been five years since 29-year-old Naji Asar left his home in Gaza, fleeing with two young nephews and a cousin – who were then just one-, five- and nine-years old – to seek safety and peace elsewhere. After two years in Greece, Naji and his young family members sought refugee status in Iceland and, after a year in Reykjavík, Naji could apply to bring his family – including the parents of the children he had been caring for – to join him here.

That right to family reunification became a central platform to a protest that took shape on Austurvöllur, on the doorstep of Icelandic parliament from December 27, 2023, through January 24 of this year. There, Naji, along with other Palestinian refugees and immigrants, and supporters, called for the government to do more in the face of the atrocities

being committed in Gaza. They did it by camping peacefully in the square, enduring the depths of Icelandic winter for the cause.

"It's very hard. It's very cold," Naji told the Grapevine at the time. "But we sit here to feel what my family feels. We sit here for justice, for peace, for a response. We will sit here forever." It didn't take forever, and on March 9, Iceland welcomed 73 Palestinian refugees, including the parents of the children in Naji's care.

It's public – or what the government would call "disruptive" – actions

continues. "We have been making demonstrations for more than eight months but nothing happens – it's more killing, more occupation, more wars. And we see what's happening at courts – the ICJ and everywhere – it doesn't work. But if we are serious about stopping life as usual, stop the system, stop school and work – stop everything because nothing is more important than a human life."

Naji believes that following in the footsteps of the students who have occupied university campuses to push for their schools' divestment from Israel and weapons manufac-

"T

he whole world knows we have been under occupation for more than 70 years – after a few days will be 76 years under occupation," says Naji Asar, a Palestinian refugee living in Reykjavík. He's referring to the anniversary of al Nakba on May 15, a couple days after our interview. "I shouldn't be here, I should be in my homeland."

The Nakba (catastrophe, in Arabic) in 1948 saw the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians by Jewish immigrants who had fled persecution in Europe and Zionists seeking to establish a Jewish state in Palestine no matter the cost. The immediate result was the destruction of 530 towns and villages and the displacement of more than 700,000 Palestinians who had lived on and cultivated those ancestral lands for generations.

The displacement of the Palestinian people and destruction of their centuries-old homes and villages has not stopped since 1948. Their population has been kettled into ever tighter borders and within more heavily fortified walls and check-

Palestine is the test for all those who say they support human rights and freedom.

like occupying public spaces and camping that Naji would like to see more people doing to express their outrage at the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people.

"For myself as a Palestinian, I don't feel like the demonstrations or marches or something like this are working," he says. "I feel like what Americans are doing now at universities, what we did before – the camping – is doing something. We have to stop our lives for other human lives."

"We make demonstrations for a few hours and then everyone goes back home or back to partying or back to whatever, but the day in Gaza doesn't stop. It's every minute, every hour. If all people – not just in Iceland, but the whole world – support Palestine and support freedom, then we have to stop our lives and do something serious, do something real, not just demonstrations," he

turers is working and has started to shake the powers that be. "The Zionist Benjamin Netanyahu, he talks about it. All ministers from the terrorist state of Israel are talking about it. And [U.S. President Joe] Biden and everyone talk about it – it shakes them. It shakes them because who are these students? They will be big people in the future."

"As Palestinians, we're tired of camping – we've been camping for 75 years," the young man says with a weary smile. While he would like to see the international community do more to bring an end to the apartheid and wholesale slaughter of Palestinian people, Naji admits he is physically and emotionally exhausted. "As Palestinians, we don't have time to be sad. We don't have time to be crying, we don't have time to look back and to stop our life. Because we have to rebuild in Gaza, we have to look for safety or to find food. We don't have a few



World

hours to cry, to sit and think we lost a daughter, we lost a sister. No, we have to run to find something to eat. To care for the kids. I don't know how to explain this, but it's so weird, the occupation cuts part of you away."

Something that has not been cut away is Naji's love of his homeland and his culture. While he fled Gaza to keep himself and his young relatives alive, he wants nothing more than to return to his home, to his family's carpentry business and to build a life like so many other twenty-somethings around the world get to do.

"If Palestine is free, we're not here," he says, as if speaking directly to the likes of Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, who has chosen this time of international unrest to push his anti-immigration policies and rally his supporters against asylum seekers. "You won't see any refugee from Palestine here. We love our homeland. We love our home. Every day we have hope when we wake up that we can go back to Palestine. We're not coming here for money or for food; we're coming just for safety and peaceful life because right now if we stay [in Gaza], we die. This genocide didn't start on October 7, they kill a few here and a few there – it's a slow genocide."

He shares the story of how disheartening it is to be a Palestinian, living in the home that your great grandfather built, only to be confronted one day by someone who has only just arrived to the land from Europe, but they somehow have papers stating that land is theirs. "And you go to court but who is there? Not anyone from Palestine, just Israeli people in court. And an Israeli judge says 'yes, this house belongs to this Zionist.'

"There is just one solution: Intifada. Revolution. We've been talking

about peace since [the signing of the Oslo accords in 1993 and 1995]. It's been more than 30 years, but we get more apartheid, we get more occupation, we get more killing, we get more people like me out of Palestine. I'm 29 years old, why am I here? Why am I not growing up with my people in my country?"

THE ORGANISATION

Since 1987, Félagið Ísland-Palestína (The Iceland-Palestine Association) has supported the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and their right to return to their homeland. However, Hjálmtýr Heiðdal's interest in the Palestinian cause predates the association.

"My name means 'War Lord,'" Hjálmtýr, 79, laughs at the irony of a lifelong peace activist carrying such a contrary moniker. "I went to Sweden to study in the 60s, when here in Iceland the American view of things was very dominant," he shares. "But in Sweden, it was quite different. The prime minister spoke against American imperialism and he was supporting the Vietnamese struggle and fight. I got involved there and a new world opened." When Hjálmtýr returned to Iceland in April 1970, an anti-war movement had sprouted in Iceland, primarily around the university.

"I was active in that movement until the end of the Vietnam war," Hjálmtýr explains, adding that he was also a member of the Maoist political party – "as far left as you were able to go at that time."

"In 1975, a group of my comrades from the Maoist movement went to Lebanon, where they met Palestinian refugees who had no home, they had no papers, they were stateless. Those friends brought back a lot of material about the struggle of the

Palestinians with Israel."

For Hjálmtýr, the rest is history. He has been an active member of the local Palestinian solidarity movement since the 1980s and was elected chairperson of the Iceland-Palestine Association in 2021.

"I'm a documentary filmmaker and I wanted to do a documentary about Palestine and Israel," Hjálmtýr recalls, explaining how he spent a great deal of time researching the role Iceland played in the United Nations' vote to partition Palestine in 1947. "Even though it's a small nation with little influence, Iceland played some part in it and it had never been investigated or written about. So I started. But after I got nine 'nos' from the film fund, I said, okay, I'll use the material to write a book."

The book, *Iceland Street in Jerusalem* tells the story of Iceland's early support of the partition plan and how Thor Thors, Iceland's representative in the UN, played an outsized role in swaying other member states – of which there were just 53 at the time – to support a plan that would grant 55 percent of historic Palestine to a Jewish state and 45 percent to a non-contiguous Arab state.

Fast forward to today and Hjálmtýr argues, "Palestine is the test for all those who say they support human rights and freedom." He points to Minister of Foreign Affairs and Independence Party MP Pórdís Kolbrún R. Gylfadóttir saying since taking over the file in April that human rights should be universal and the conventions agreed upon at the UN are of the utmost importance for a nation like Iceland. "But she supports Israel even though Israel goes against everything she says is necessary to support," he points out.

Though the Iceland-Palestine Asso-

ciation has been active for nearly 40 years, its membership and activism has multiplied in response to the most recent genocidal actions being carried out against the Palestinian people. The group has held more than 50 demonstrations, as well as solidarity walks, concerts and other happenings. They have also managed to mobilise a sizeable number of people, with Hjálmtýr pointing to recent opinion polling indicating that 76% of Icelanders support Palestine.

"Our role is to put forward demands," Hjálmtýr explains. "What we can do is demands that our government acts against genocide. Preferably, it would cut all ties with Israel, diplomatic and economical and so on."

"Many people say 'why don't you

movement so Israel knows that what they are doing is not acceptable."

Among the association's recent BDS efforts have been their public boycott of the Eurovision Song Contest in response to Israel's participation and a campaign against Israeli-owned payment gateway Rapyd, which has offices in Iceland. "That's been quite successful," Hjálmtýr says. "A lot of companies are leaving them."

"I think that the BDS movement is a peaceful protest," Hjálmtýr continues. "And that is the only way which would be very successful. Israelis will begin to feel their isolation in their wallets."

Hjálmtýr admits he's not optimistic he'll see a solution to the apartheid in his lifetime. "The support of the

That is the only way which would be very successful. Israelis will begin to feel their isolation in their wallets.

support the people of Sudan? Why do you focus on Palestine?" Hjálmtýr continues. "The thing is that the Icelandic government has no real possibility of influencing what's happening in Sudan, except by maybe sending food. But politically, they have the possibility to influence what's happening in Gaza and Palestine. For example, Oslo recently decided to ban all imports of goods from illegal Israeli settlements – and that makes Israel very angry. The Icelandic government also has the possibility to pressure Israel. So our role is to influence the Icelandic government and Icelandic people to be active in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)

U.S. is so strong and I think there's a long road ahead," he laments, "but eventually it is going to end and what's happening now might speed up the process. The protests in the U.S. now remind me of the protest during the Vietnam War. The U.S. lost that war and it's possible a worldwide movement against Israel, against Western support for Israel, will bring about change. I'm not sure, but our slogan is 'Gaza will not give up. We will not give up.'"

THE ARTIST/ACTIVIST

The City of Reykjavík got a new mural in November, 2023, when, furnished with paint and supplies



from the Iceland-Palestine Association, Julia Mai Linnéa Maria sought to create a symbol of solidarity with Palestine on the corner of Skólovörðustígur and Grettisgata.

Julia Mai's mural recreates photographer Mohammed Salem's heart-breaking shot of Palestinian woman Inas Abu Maamar cradling the body of her five-year-old niece, who was killed along with her mother and sister by an Israeli missile strike on their home in Khan Younis in October 2023. Accompanying the image are the Palestinian flag and the words "Frjáls Palestína" (Free Palestine). It wasn't long before it was vandalised.

"I was repairing the mural because someone had added 'from Hamas' to 'Free Palestine' and sprayed over the heart with the woman holding her niece," Julia Mai recalls when asked about an encounter she filmed and which went viral. "[A couple] came up to me to tell me how offended they were and how scared she was because whenever she sees Arabs, her knees are shaking. It was just this textbook Zionist bullshit. A lot of the things the man was saying didn't make sense. Like Hamas is coming for Iceland. I didn't realise until I watched the video back afterwards that 'wow, this was insane.'"

"I don't see how you can be offended by a painting, but not be offended by where the painting came from – the actual atrocities continuing to this day in Gaza."

"If they say things to my face, I'll respond," Julia Mai says of negative interactions she has had with passers-by while painting the Palestine mural and during her activism since. "But I always try to keep anger out of it because there's no point. Like, if people are going to come up to me and say these things, they're not in a place where we can have a discussion. I think that's just kind of a

love to go to Gaza at some point, but I don't agree with you on this.' But it doesn't really get to me that much. I've been working so long in bars, and I'm so used to drunk people harassing me. I was bullied in school. So, I don't mind. It doesn't really affect me personally. Because that's on them. That's not me. I know that I'm not a 'terrorist whore.'"

"I think the real terrorist is Israel – terrorists funded by the West," she adds. "No matter how I put it, they call me a radical either way, so I may as well get my radical views out in the open – as if it's radical to think

me," she says. "My priorities have changed, I'm seeing things in a different light. And I think a lot of people can relate to that."

Julia Mai explains that the occupation of Palestine is something she had been aware of since her teenage years – her father even gifted her a keffiyeh when she was around 15-years old. "Although I haven't been as vocal before, I've been boycotting for years," she says. "I wish I had done more before, but I think a lot of people can say that. We just didn't really grasp the severity of it. But now there's no going back."

That's a set of morals she is passing on to her children, as Julia Mai says she has explained the conflict to her four-year-old daughter as an "evil man who doesn't want all the children to play. And that's why Mommy's not buying this chocolate. That's why I'm boycotting this. That's why I'm painting this. That's why I'm writing this poem."

In addition to creating art in opposition to Israel's war on the Palestinian people – an endeavour that spurred a collaboration with Wear The Peace that will see Julia Mai's art sold to raise money for humanitarian aid in Gaza – Julia has been a staple of pro-Palestine protests in Reykjavík and has become a board member

of the Iceland-Palestine Association. She was also soon en route to Brussels on May 17 to take part in a massive BDS rally.

Back home in Iceland, however, Julia Mai would like to see action from the government that aligns with the sentiments of the Icelandic public. "It's interesting to see how our government does not reflect us at all, when it comes to Bjarni Benediktsson in his privileged, racist little world getting more offended by tents in Austurvöllur than all the tents that we see in the news with displaced people," she says. "I would love to see more actions taken from our government officials."

DON'T LOSE HOPE FOR GAZA

The state of the world may seem bleak. It's emotionally exhausting to watch a genocide in real time on social media and wonder why people aren't just constantly screaming in the streets and why global powers aren't doing everything to stop it.

"We ask God, every day we pray and ask for free people to push all of this more," Naji says. "Because free people have the safety and democracy and freedom to push for a solution. We Palestinians still just have hope." ■

It doesn't doesn't really affect me personally. Because that's on them. That's not me. I know that I'm not a "terrorist whore."

lost cause. Online, I block and delete – it's not worth my time. I'd rather spend my time talking to people in a setting where they might have a chance to rethink."

"There are a lot of trolls. I've been called all the worst things," Julia Mai continues. "And it's always like, 'Oh, why don't you go to Gaza and they will rape you.' And I think 'I would

children should be alive.'

The social media following that came with releasing the video of her remarkably calm response to a grown man pointing at her painting and screaming "that is Hamas" had little impact on the Swedish artist's resolve. "The whole viral thing hasn't changed me as much as my worldview in general has changed

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The Grapevine's Top Picks



BASHAR MURAD

Saturday May 18
17:30 & 20:30
Iðnó

3.900 - 5.900 ISK

Bashar Murad has had quite the relationship with Iceland these past few years. A saga, if you will. The Sweden-based Palestinian artist became acquainted with 2019 Eurovision contenders Hatari at their now infamous turn in Tel Aviv, and this year joined the running to represent Iceland at the most controversial edition of the song contest in recent memory. Arguably for the better, he didn't make that cut, but he won the hearts of the people with his super catchy tune "Wild West." With both a family show and an 18-plus set, you can party in solidarity all night long. RX



DANCE MARATHON 2024

Saturday May 25
11:00
National Gallery of Iceland
1.500 - 15.000 ISK

Why run a marathon when you can dance a marathon? The very word "marathon" brings forth all kinds of assumptions – physical prowess, high endurance, peak performance. At the second annual Dance Marathon, you can fouetté those notions right over the barre cause none of that matters a shake. Held within the cadre of the DansDagar festival, the seven-hour charity event is a space where every body with any level of physical abilities is welcomed to celebrate the joy of movement. This year's edition raises funds for SLF, The Benefit Society for Children with Disabilities, because everyone's moves matter. RX



VIIBRA ALBUM RELEASE SHOW

Sunday May 26
21:00
Harpa (Norðurljós)
4.900 ISK

Back in 2016, seven flautists were brought together by the one and only Björk to perform on her Utopia tour. Yada yada yada, they're now called Viibra and they are releasing their self-titled debut album! (Read more on page 28.) Incorporating movement along with their intricate and beautifully chaotic compositions, the group will perform four pieces from their upcoming release, thus proving why the big B kept these musicians in tow for more than five years and multiple tours. With choreography by Margrét Bjarnadóttir, who did Ragnar Kjartansson's "No Tomorrow," we expect this show to truly blow you away. RX



Culture Cover

Popping Onto The Stage

The Upptakarinn series gives newcomers an equal platform

WORDS
IMAGE

Rex Beckett
Joana Fontinha

been going since January 2024, after Agnes put out an open call in December for bands to apply for the series. Much to her surprise, she received somewhere close to 50 applications in the first week – all from artists and bands who had never played live before. With dozens of applications in hand, the Upptakarinn series launched as free, late afternoon all-ages showcases on the stage of LEMMY's perma-tented back garden.

"I started it for young people, so I thought I would get a lot of them, but it's mostly been people in their thirties and forties," says Agnes. "Our youngest performer was 12 and the

view. The new name is the local term for a wine bottle opener, perfectly connoting the figurative de-corking of an artist playing the series.

"I thought it was funny but I was getting comments on Facebook that it's incorrect language," laughs Agnes over the name change. "I'm applying for a grant from the city of Reykjavík so I can grow the series and pay artists. It could do a bit better, the whole concept, if it was called something grammatically correct."

Also the concert and cultural booker at Iðnó, 25-year old Agnes has experienced her own figurative de-corking as an up and coming booker

what to do when they're booking a concert or they don't have the experience of advertising themselves," says Agnes. "If they want to ask me any questions about how advertising works or what to have prepared when they are asking to play somewhere, I can help them with that. I encourage them to ask because everybody thinks they have to do everything on their own, but you don't. I'm so willing to help anybody that asks."

With the series currently booked through the month of July, Agnes hopes to see it growing bigger and better. LEMMY's foot-traffic heavy location that bleeds concert sounds all the way into Austurstræti have brought fruitful and supportive audiences to the last four shows, helping the artists have memorable first live performance experiences.

"Because it's an event for only new artists all taking their first steps, I think that makes it a bit less stressful because you know you're not the only newcomer," says Agnes. "Everybody who comes as well is so welcoming, and [all the performers] have gotten compliments, which gives them a boost too. They always get an audience, which is so nice." ■

I really want everybody to be able to play... Our youngest performer was 12 and the oldest has been 60.

"I really want everybody to be able to play," says Agnes Hlynssdóttir, manager and booker at LEMMY, who conceived of the entire series. "I've had so many young people wanting to play here but because it's a bar with all these age requirements, they can't play Thursday or Friday evening concerts just because they're not allowed to drink."

The monthly concert series has

oldest has been 60. He's been playing guitar and loved music his whole life, and then just finally wanted to make it work. He doesn't even want to go incredibly far. He just wanted to share it with people and it was such a beautiful thing."

Formerly called "Upp og Komandi" as an onomatopoeic translation of the English "up and coming," Agnes changed the series name to Upptakarinn while doing this inter-

view. In Reykjavík's nightlife scene over the past four years. Having been hired to manage LEMMY at age 21 through a stroke of sheer luck, she rapidly self-educated in the field of event management by "just being annoying and asking questions," she says. She also treats the series as an opportunity to impart knowledge she has collected through her independent field research on others.

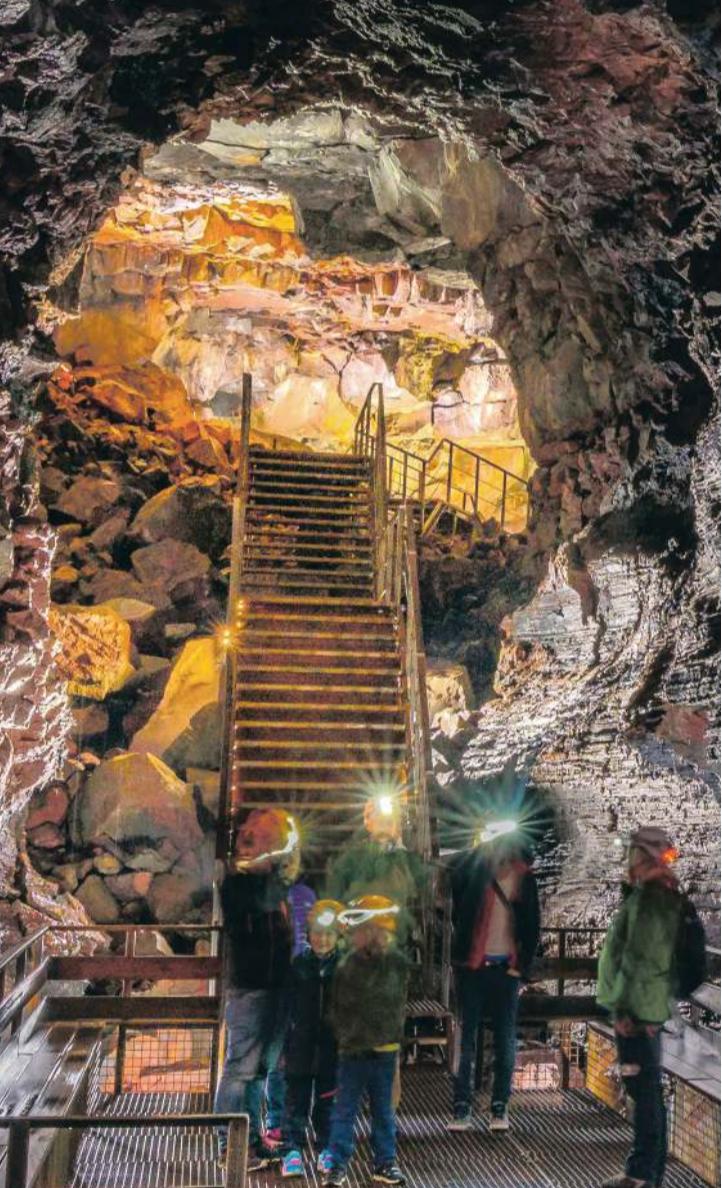
"Many [bands] really don't know

The next Upptakarinn (Up & Coming) concert takes place on Saturday, May 18 at 18:00 at LEMMY. To apply to play, contact info@lemmy.is.

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Culture
Feature

Art Off The Page

Books? Art? The Reykjavík Art Book Fair has it all

WORDS
IMAGE

Iryna Zubenko
Joana Fontinha

lished and less established artists, galleries, museums, like the National Gallery. You see examples from the whole scene using this platform equally," says Edda.

Mention "art book," and one might think of a glossy coffee table book, a pamphlet titled something along the lines of "radical intervention," or a monograph of a respected artist — objects that seem slightly obscure. Indeed, for those who didn't attend art school, art books might come across as inaccessible or even intimidating. But Edda Kristín Sigurjónsdóttir and Joe Keys are on a mission as the organisers of the upcoming Reykjavík Art Book Fair to prove that art books can offer something both to the professional and the curious eye.

ORIGINS AND INNOVATION

The Reykjavík Art Book Fair debuted a few years ago and has since been building a name for itself within the local arts and culture calendar. Initiated by visual artist Sigurður Atli Sigurðsson, the project started within the walls of the Iceland Academy of the Arts. "In the beginning, it was focused on zines that the students at the Art Academy were working on," Edda explains. "From there, it grew, looking more towards the book fairs that happen around the world."

Over the years, the fair has taken many forms, with its venues changing to accommodate the scale. After being held in Kjarvalsstaðir and Ásmundarsalur, it moved two years ago into the Reykjavík Art Museum.

"There is great value in having a platform like this, where you have all those active in the scene coming together — both individual artists, students, collectives, well-established

participants find fresh, creative ways to interact with the fair. For instance, a publisher Consonant Collective is planning a live record cutting event. "What they intend to do at the fair is record people reading their poetry directly onto the lathe record," Joe explains. "They're taking the idea of poetry in book form and running with it in real time. It's quite fantastic!"

While the fair has expanded considerably since its inception, the atmosphere remains intimate and approachable, unlike some of the larger fairs you'd find in cities like New York or Paris. It's perfect for a quick browse or a longer hangout to peruse the publications on offer while connecting directly with the artists.

"Alongside the fair, where people

can come and buy the books, we will have four exhibitions in different places that sort of show the history of the artist books in Iceland," Joe says, highlighting the programming on the periphery of the fair itself.

The exhibition programme starts at the Living Art Museum, displaying a variety of artist's books from their collection, including works by Dieter Roth, Jan Voss, Rúna Þorkelsdóttir, Þorvaldur Þorsteinsson, Philip Corner, Alison Knowles and Sigríður Björnsdóttir. Next, Y Gallery will present seven books by contemporary artists based in Iceland and abroad, exploring and questioning the medium's definition. Home-based gallery 1.h.v. (Fyrsta hæð til vinstrí) will showcase works by artists from diverse backgrounds, including national treasure Eggert Pétursson. Associate Gallery will host Rebound by Patrick Killoran, featuring rebound books from his personal library with new covers bearing messages and names.

OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

"Artist books and art books are always such a struggle to define," says Joe when asked about the works represented at the fair. For a country the size of Iceland, the variety of books on display is astonishing. "We're not worried about the definition," he adds. "It's just how people interpret it. We've got museums selling artists' monographs and then we've got ARKIR making very handcrafted books, often one-of-a-kind. It's a complete spectrum of professional, personal and hand-crafted. There's room for everything in between."

It's not an event that is closed and scary and you have to be a part of the art community to be there.



Edda chimes in, "Last year, the diversity was tremendous. It was inspiring to walk between the tables and see all the different versions of art books. I think this is a great way to expand people's views on art books, but also books in general." Whether you're looking to buy a monograph of a nationally-renowned artist or a weird pamphlet of haikus, the belief that art books cost a fortune is not entirely accurate. "There are these odd objects that cost a lot of money," says Joe. "But there are also other objects that cost nothing and are made by art students who are giving them away for free."

Similarly to the diverse mediums represented, the fair also boasts a geographically diverse selection — with a few international guests and local participants from across Iceland. "It's nice to have participants from the countryside," says Edda. "It's not just a Reykjavík kind of thing."

She hopes this geographical inclusivity will foster new connections and collaborations. "I think this fair

also has the potential to develop into some sort of meeting point — an opportunity to meet and connect."

"It's not an event that is closed and scary and you have to be a part of the art community to be there," adds Edda, adding that the Reykjavík Art Book Fair welcomes families with kids, teenagers exploring new horizons and those with already formed artistic visions.

ENGAGE AT EVERY TURN

The facilitators outline that since the fair's programme is quite varied and extensive, it was essential to reflect that visually. Collaborating with designers Agnar Freyr Stefánsson and Einar Viðar Guðmundsson Thoroddsen, they try to use illustrative and somewhat humorous imagery to capture the essence of the event without overwhelming visitors. "We've got so many exhibitions to talk about, different participants and extra events that we don't want to overload people with information," explains Joe. "We're figuring out how we can work with as little as possible."

Edda adds that their approach to visuals was inspired by Hildigunnur Birgisdóttir's exhibition for the Venice Biennale, where "all the necessary information was incorporated into the artworks," eliminating the need for explanatory brochures or wall text.

Beyond showcasing the art books, the fair strives to transform the courtyard of Reykjavík Art Museum into a vibrant social platform, at least for a few days. Visitors are invited to relax and mingle, enjoying Icelandic wild ale by Grugg & Makk and exploring offerings like the pop-up flower shop Blómstra. Add the exhibition programme and the fair becomes "a curated navigation through the city."

"This is the perfect place to come and buy the Christmas present," Edda laughs. "Just get it over with."

■

Reykjavík Art Book Fair runs May 23 to 26. Visit reykjavikartbookfair.com for detailed information.

VIÐ DJÚPIÐ
17.-22.06.2024

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Orchester im Treppenhaus [DE] Höjmsveit Orchestra

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Moritz Ter-Nedden [DE] Fidla Violin

Christine Köhler [DE] Flauta Flute

Goran Stevanovic [BA] Harmonika Accordion

Ellis Ludwig-Leone [US] Tóskáld Composer

Eliza Bagg [US] Söngur Vocalist

Antigone [US] Trió Trio

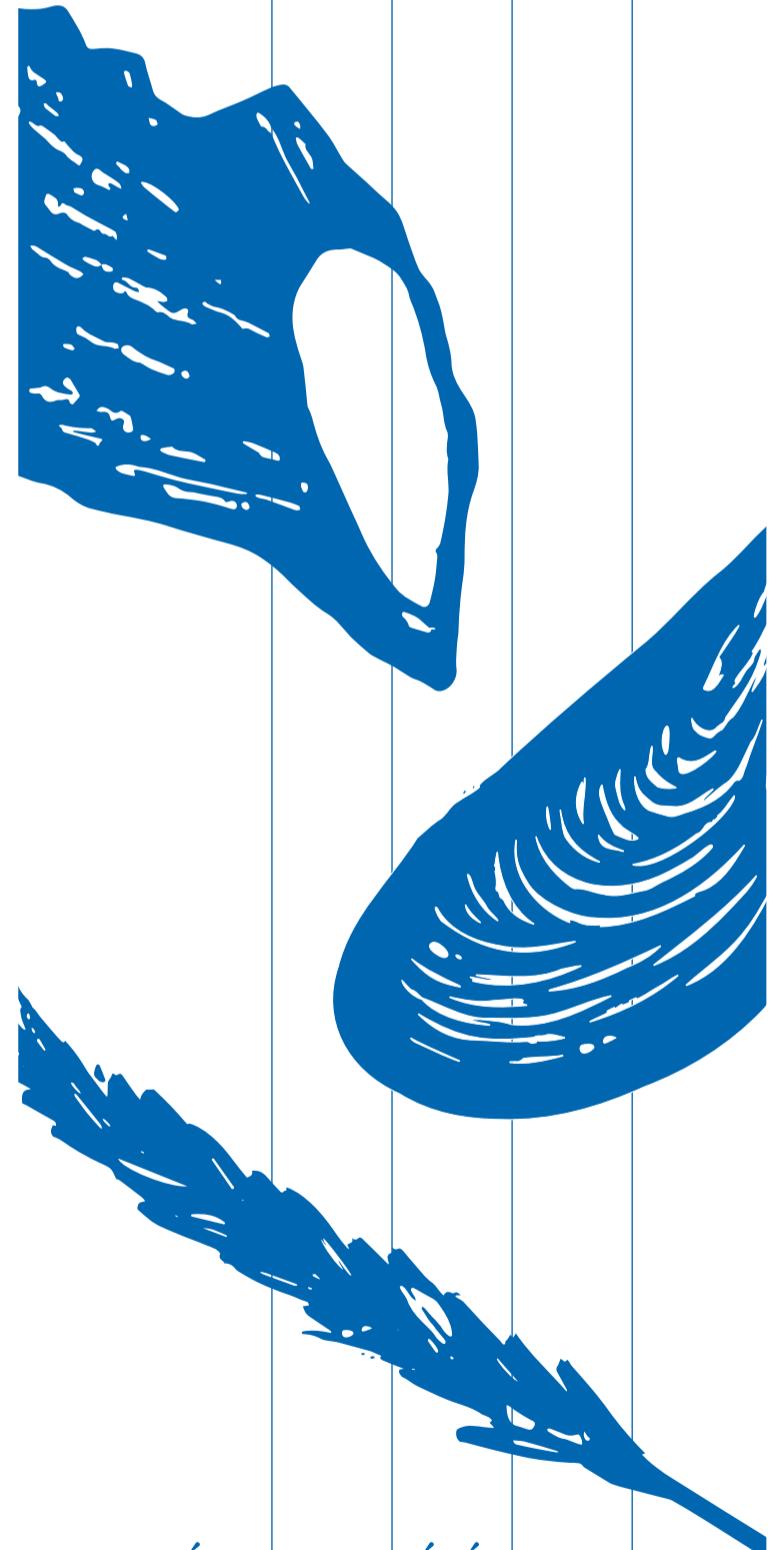
Sæunn Þorsteinsdóttir [IS] Selló Cello

Halldór Smárason [IS] Tóskáld Composer

Errata [IS] Tóskáld Composers

Cauda Collective [IS] Kvartett Quartet

Thomas Posth [DE] Höjmsveitarstjóri Conductor



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Film Feature

Skjaldborg Calling

The cinematic celebration returns to Patreksfjörður May 17 to 20

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGES Joana Fontinha & Supplied stills

PREMIERES ONLY

Skjaldborg is an amorphous, filmmaker-driven festival that throws open its doors each year (quite literally, as the screenings are free) for a diversely curated documentary film experience. So many things about this festival are odd and unconventional, but once you've attended for the first time, you're bound to return.

One of the festival's major draws is its focus on premieres. Premiering a film at Skjaldborg has become a quality trademark for Icelandic documentarians. In 2024, the festival is premiering six feature films and seven shorts.

"We received a record number of submissions," Kristín Andrea explains. "And a record number of feature length [films] – really long feature length ones. A lot of them were over 90 minutes or just about."

Though not intentional, Skjaldborg's selections often follow a theme. "This year, we have quite a lot of music focus in both the features and the shorts," she adds. The music-related films this year include Kjartan Trauner's documentary *Turn of the Century*, featuring music from the album *Dream is Murder* by Sin Fang, Sóley and Örvar Smárason; Árni Sveinsson's *Cowboy of the North*:

The Story of Johnny King, telling the story of an old Icelandic country singer; a film that follows a punk band until their last concert *Purrkur Pillnikk: Sofandi vakandi lifandi dauður* by Kolbeinn Hringur and Bambus Einarsson; and *Halldorophone?*, the story of an odd instrument by Nikulás Tumi Hlynsson.

But there's more to Skjaldborg's lineup than music. The festival will share stories about changing careers at 83, crafting handmade paper, the story of the last machinist in Þingeyri, the tunnel that celebrated graffiti in Reykjavík, an animated film about growing cherry tomatoes and more.

One of the films Kristín and Sigga highlight in the programme is *Fjallíð það öskrar (When the Mountain Roars)* by Daniel Bjarnason. The film documents the devastating Súðavík avalanche in 1995, which claimed the lives of 14 people and injured 12 others. It features interviews with three survivors and includes archival VHS tapes found amidst the rubble. "It is a very touching, heartbreaking film," says Kristín Andrea. "It's gonna strike a chord with the locals in Patreksfjörður because they've also experienced avalanches."

"These sorts of things [avalanches and mudslides] are a big part of life

for a lot of small towns around the country," says Sigga Regina. "Even living in Reykjavík, I remember learning what to do if you get caught in an avalanche."

To bring the reality into a sharp focus, after the screening, the festival visitors will be invited to take a guided walk with a municipality

Kristín Andrea. "We've sensed that there's a need to introduce a Special Jury Award for the shorts." She explains that over the years, the Jury Award would usually go to an outstanding feature, but the team saw the need to recognise documentary shorts. This was similarly observed by others in the film industry this year, with the Edda Awards by the

As I meet Kristín Andrea Pórðardóttir and Sigríður Regína Sigurbórsdóttir, members of the Skjaldborg production team, I'm eager to learn what's in store for this year's event. Sigga Regína is quick to share her excitement: "It's going to be great."

I don't need much convincing. Having attended the documentary film festival in the remote fishing town of Patreksfjörður last year, I know her words are true.

Skjaldborg has always been about nurturing the grassroots.

representative on and around the protective walls of Patreksfjörður, helping them better understand how important these structures are for the town's safety.

RECOGNISING SHORT FILMS

The films screening at Skjaldborg are competing for monetary and in-service prizes. In addition to Skjaldborg's Jury Award and The Audience Award, known as the Einar (named after a local carpenter who's been crafting it since the very start of the festival), this year's edition of Skjaldborg is trying something new.

"We're starting a new award," says

Icelandic Film and Television Academy also introducing a special award for short films.

"Skjaldborg has always been about nurturing the grassroots. An essential part of the programming has been about including shorts," says Kristín Andrea, adding that for young filmmakers, documentary shorts are a helpful way to experiment with form and try things out. "This is going to be a really good addition in terms of nurturing up and coming documentarians."

SWAPPING CANNES FOR PATRÓ

Coincidentally, for two years in a row,





Skjaldborg will welcome a creative duo as their guests of honour, with award-winning film editors Maya Daisy Hawke and Joe Bini in the spotlight this year. The married couple and regular collaborators are bringing a selection of their work to Patreksfjörður – Maya edited Oscar and Sundance-winning *Navalny* (directed by Daniel Roher) about the late Russian opposition leader, and both Maya and Joe collaborated on Werner Herzog's *Grizzly Man*, which follows Timothy Treadwell, who devoted his life to living with grizzly bears in Alaska.

Followed by two screenings, the couple will host an inspirational talk for the local audience, looking back at their career-forming films. "They're coming here, even though they're really supposed to be in Cannes," laughs Kristín Andrea. "For the guests of honour we've had, this is just a very unusual festival. I guess, when you've been to all these big festivals several times, it's fun to go to a very remote place." "It's the magic of Patreksfjörður," smiles Sigga Regína.

PALESTINE IN FOCUS

Reflecting on the more than 200 days since Israel's latest war on Gaza, the festival's organisers emphasise the need to provide a platform. Therefore, they'll be hosting a special screening of three Palestinian shorts. "For us, it was important to highlight the beauty of the Palestinian people, their spirit of resistance and their culture," Kristín Andrea says.

Sigga Regína adds, "The films we are screening are not new; they're older, but they celebrate the Palestinian culture and are also quite related to what is going on – they have elements of peaceful resistance and the use of tradition in resistance to oppression."

The curated films for the slot include *Flying Papers* by Nitin Sawhney and Roger Hill, *Made In Palestine* by Mariam Dwedar and *The Silent Protest: Jerusalem 1929* by Mahasen Nasser-Eldin. The team has invited Icelandic-Palestinian filmmaker Fahad Falur Jabali to do an introduction and contextualise the films.

"One [of the films] is about children who broke a world record by flying over 7,000 kites on the Gaza strip," Kristín Andrea says of *Flying Papers*, emphasising how a kite serves as a symbol of freedom. "The method that people are using now to distract children from the horrors of what's going on is kite making," says Sigga Regína.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

For the past few years, The National Film Archive of Iceland has curated a screening at Skjaldborg and this

Ester Bíbí Ásgeirs Þóttir from the National Film Archive will introduce the screening, focusing on the importance of controlling one's narrative through archival preservation.

MORE THAN JUST MOVIES

While most of the festival happens inside Skjaldborgarbió, Skjaldborg's packed programme extends far beyond film screenings. It's about nurturing a new generation of documentary enthusiasts, connecting with industry fellows and potentially

They're coming to Patreksfjörður even though they're really supposed to be in Cannes.

year is no exception. "The work they do at the archive is amazing," the organisers agree, highlighting their impressive efforts to collect old films, clean them up, scan them in 4K, restore and curate them.

The collaboration between the Archive and the Skjaldborg team aims to spotlight important works from the history of Icelandic cinema. This year's selection from the Archive brings two shorts by Reynir Oddsson, a pioneering filmmaker who introduced the French New Wave to Iceland.

Speaking about the deeper significance of the programming, Kristín Andrea says, "I was looking at everything that's happening in Palestine. There are attempts to completely erase the race, universities, archives, mosques, homes – anything that could contain any traces of culture is being bulldozed over." She draws a parallel to the 1995 Súðavík avalanche depicted in the premiering film. "I was thinking about all the care put into finding any items to preserve and give back to the survivors here. It's amazing to see the complete difference – the care and the respect for people who suffered in Súðavík versus what's happening in Gaza," reflects Kristín Andrea. "The importance of an archive is huge. It's not until you lose it that you realise how important it is."

cultivating future filmmakers: the team offers a documentary filmmaking course for children, develops pitch workshops for filmmakers and provides opportunities to showcase unfinished works-in-progress. The stages and topics of these films vary greatly.

"It depends on the filmmaker at what point in their process they would like to let other people know about their project," says Sigga Regína, highlighting the importance of feedback. "Having an open conversation, discussing what you're doing, your methods and next steps can be really precious."

The festivities don't end as the cinema closes. After hours, the festival leaves the theatre for a home-cooked fish feast and spills out on the streets with a lively parade.

"All the fun, quirky traditions are still there," says Kristín Andrea, inviting attendees to a closing party with a DJ set by FM Belfast.

"The swimming pool is open. And it's included in the festival passes, which is very important for people like me," Sigga Regína smiles. "It's going to be great!" ■

Skjaldborg runs from May 17 to 20 in Patreksfjörður. For full programme and info visit: skjaldborg.is

Egils saga PROJECT

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Borgarnes
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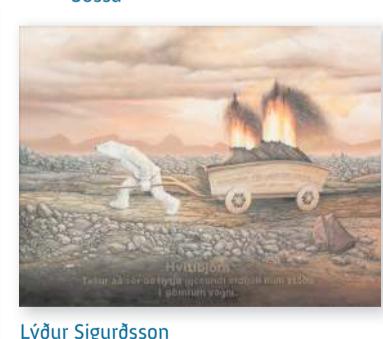
Haraldur Bilson



Sossa



Pétur Gautur



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Skólavörðustígur 22

C

Centre Map

We're here to fill you in on our personal favourite places around town – and a few to consider avoiding.

Dining

1 NAPOLI

Tryggvagata 24

We love places that do one thing and do them damn well. This takeaway place is a case in point. Napoli offers sourdough Neapolitan-style pizzas with a menu to match – think margherita, quattro formaggi, parma, calzone – plus vegan options and magnificent sandwiches. Look out for their lunch offer, every day from 11:30 to 15:00. JT

2 GAETA GELATO

Aðalstræti 6
& Hlemmur Mathöll

Gaeta Gelato is at the centre of a heated ongoing debate at the Grapevine office about who makes the best ice cream in the country. For those keen on the deep tastiness of Italian gelato, this place is IT. They are also located right smack downtown, so you can take that icecream for a stroll – we suggest a stroll to their other location for another scoop. JT

3 PLANTAN

Njálsgata 64

This cute little neighborhood cafe is 100% vegan and does a few things right: their soup of the day menu updates every week and uses seasonal produce, they mastered the plant-based cheese bun recipe to perfection, and this might be the most hearty vegan brunches in town. Look out for the daily bun and coffee deal, it truly is like a warm hug. IZ

5 CAFÉ BABALÚ

Skólavörðustígur 22

This quirky café hangout is a great choice when you're looking for a cozy, chill experience. Decked with kitschy decor and plush chairs, the café is perfect for a refuge from an instant shower of rain. If you're looking to snuggle up with a book and a good cup of coffee, look no further. JB

6 BAN THAI

Laugavegur 130

The absolute GOAT – as they say – in Thai cuisine in Reykjavík. Ban Thai's menu is dotted with little symbols of chili, denoting the spice level of each course. You're welcome to order a level-5 chili course, but do so at your own risk. JB

7 GRÁI KÖTTURINN

Hverfisgata 16a

This no-nonsense downtown staple has been serving Reykjavík dwellers quality breakfast food since 1997. Tucked away in a cute cellar, the diner boasts retro Icelandic design charm, while its menu is far from outdated. Pancakes, bagels and frying oil all have their special place at Grái Kötturinn. As Grái Kötturinn closes at 14:30 every day, it's not a place for nighthawks, but early-birds. JB

8 CHICKPEA

Hallveigarstígur 1

This Mediterranean-inspired restaurant is a great place for a quick bite. Servings are generous and the

food nutritious, meaning you'll go full well into the day. They do wraps, falafels, and all kinds of salads exceptionally well. Prices aren't extremely steep, but nothing to write home about either. JB

9 KRÓNAN

Hallveigarstígur 1 & more locations

If you're ever in a pinch while looking for something cheap to eat if you're downtown just go to Krónan and pick out some flatkókur. Flatkókur goes great with everything. Be it the Mediterranean/Icelandic fusion of lathering some with hummus, or turn it into a poor-man's pizza with pizza sauce and cheese. Honestly, the flatkaka is an empty canvas for you to paint your wildest dreams on. JB

10 JÓMFРÚIN

Lækjargata 4, 101 Reykjavík

Icelanders may have a love-hate relationship with the Danes, but let's be honest, who can resist craving a delicious smørrebrød every now and then? If you get what we are talking about, there's no better place in town for an authentic Danish smørrebrød than Jómfrúin. This family-run restaurant specializes in serving Danish and Scandinavian dishes, and to top it off, it boasts a fantastic outdoor terrace where you can relax, sip a beer and complain about politics overlooking the Icelandic parliament. IZ

Drinking

11 APERÓ VÍNBAR

Laugavegur 20b

A wine bar that is both opulent and accessible? Yes please. The small team at Aperó remember the orders of regulars and make first-timers feel like regulars. If you know what you like, Aperó will tick your boxes; and if you're new to wine, the sommelier will soon unite you with your ideal glass. CF

12 KEX HOSTEL

Skúlagata 28

The former biscuit factory now serves as a trendy hostel, with a bar, restaurant and a live concert space. There's always something going on, and if not, it's a great spot to grab those after-work drinks. With a rotation of foreign tourists who stumble onto a heavy metal show happening in the restaurant, you're always bound for an enjoyable experience. JB

13 KAFFIBARINN

Bergstaðastræti 1

There are no correct words to explain just how iconic Kaffibarinn is in the local bar scene. It's the perennial hangout for the who's who of Reykjavík, welcoming everyone from members of Blur to curious passers by and everyone in between. Kaffibarinn is an establishment in and of itself. JB

14 VITABAR

Bergþórðugata 21

If you're staying in Reykjavík more than a few days, you ought to find

your own dive bar – this is ours. It seems like the time froze at Vitabar, but we love it that way. People come for their famous blue cheese burger, but stay for a few pints and delicious fries. Sometimes I wish Vitabar discovered craft beer, but I go back nevertheless – for a late night bite and Thule on draft. IZ

15 VÍNSTÚKAN TIU SOPAR

Laugavegur 27

There are a few bars in Reykjavík that have learned how to do wine right, and Vínstúkan Tiu sopar, although located in the middle of the chaos and tourist buzz of Laugavegur, is one of them. Craving Pét-nat? In the mood for orange wine? Ready to explore small Slovenian wineries? You name it – the bar's staff will be ready to come up with suggestions that will suit any pocket. Don't get me started on their small bites to pair with wine – I'm already dreaming about their grilled peppers and torched broccoli with salted lemon. IZ

Shopping & Activities

16 BÍÓ PARADÍS

Hverfisgata 54

Sometimes the smell of popcorn fills the air of Hverfisgata, as if beckoning you to come inside. You succumb and find yourself in the cutest art house cinema with colourful posters on the walls and vintage-looking bar straight outta Wes Anderson movie. There's always a film screening and you rarely need to book tickets in advance, so enjoy the old school walk-in experience and one of the best Happy Hours in town. IZ

17 VESTURBÆJARLAUG

Hofsvallagata

Opening hours: 6:30-22:00

Mon.-Fri., 9:00-21:00 Sat.-Sun.

One of the many public swimming pools found in the capital area, Vesturbærjarlaug's reputation is one of affluence, as many of Icelandic society's jet-setters are based in and around the Vesturbær neighbourhood. Be prepared to literally rub shoulders with actors, politicians, and Björk. JB

18 EINARSGARDUR

Laufásvegur 79

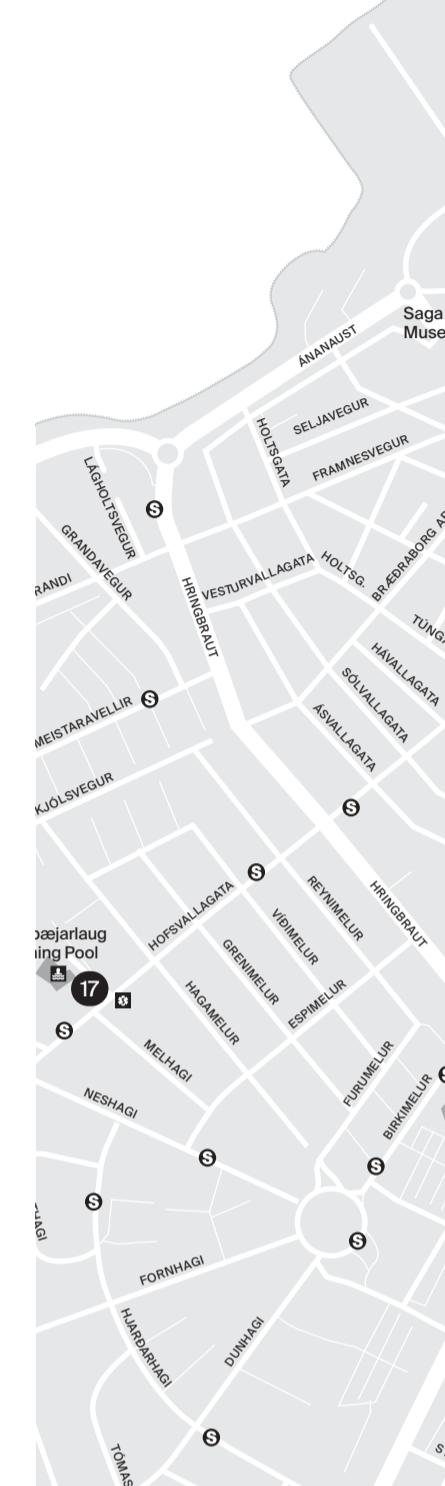
This little green space nestled into the curving juncture of Laufásvegur and Gamla Hringbraut is an oasis in the city. Exposed to full sun seemingly all the time, it's a peaceful spot to stroll through, climb trees, luxuriate on the grass or toss the ball for your four-legged friend. Don't do that last thing, though. It's not allowed. CF

Be Warned

19 101 BISTRO

Austurstræti 3

The bistro on the corner of Ingólfstorg and Austurstræti that has a plaque outside saying, "Come in and try the worst [insert popular food



item] that one guy on Tripadvisor said we had", or something like that. It's a trap, do not go there. That plaque has been in the same spot ever since Hrunið. RG

20 SBARRO

Austurstræti 17 &

Vatnsmýrarvegur 10

"What is this shit?" is how Greil Marcus famously opened his review of Bob Dylan's 1970 album in Rolling Stone. It is appropriate here. It looks like pizza, it is sold as pizza, it's priced like foie gras, but it tastes like salted shit. Avoid. RG

21 REYKJAVÍK FISH RESTAURANT

Tryggvagata 8

Our beef with this place has to do with their "plokki" (Traditional Icelandic Fish Stew). Taste wise, there is nothing wrong with how Reykjavík Fish makes their "plokki", the problem is that the volume you get for the price is unacceptable; a tiny cast iron pan of fish stew for 2.690 ISK. An outrage. RG ■



A



Map

H

M

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11

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15

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New In Town

Ellý *

LAUGAVEGUR 12, 101 REYKJAVÍK

With summer on the doorstep and everyone getting in the mood to party, it's the perfect time to have new bars to take our boozy butts to. New watering hole Ellý brings that big summer energy, with its fresh floral wallpaper and eclectic cosy-classy décor, it feels like stepping into a botanical bistro. The vintage posters on the walls and typeface of the name denote its nod to Icelandic songstress Ellý Vilhjálms, which we love. With the option of ordering delicious tacos from neighbouring La Poblana to pair with one of the fine craft beers courtesy of Ægir Brewery, the menu is timeless. ■

OPENING HOURS:
Every day from 16:00



B

FOOD HALL & BAR

PÓSTHÚS

PÓSTHÚSSSTRÆTI | 101 REYKJAVÍK

REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE
BEST OF REYKJAVÍK
2024
BEST FOODHALL

HAPPY HOUR
16:00 - 18:00

Art Exhibitions

17.05–30.05.24

Gallery openings, happenings, showings and pop-up exhibitions all around the capital region

Opening

ANNABELLE'S HOME

Anna Hrund Másdóttir & Jasa Baka – Bed of Poetic Lettuce

Activating the etheric, astral and mental bodies, this installation evokes a dreamlike state inside the surreal staged bedroom, charged with the energy of the artists' spiritual offerings and wishes.

Opens May 17
Runs until June 14

Ongoing

ÁSMUNDARSAFN (REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)

At Hand
Sculpture

Runs until September 1

THE EINAR JÓNSSON SCULPTURE MUSEUM

Bryndýr Baldursdóttir & Einar Jónsson – Be-coming
Sculpture, mixed media

Runs until August 25

ELLIÐAÁRSTÖÐ

Kindred
Interdisciplinary group exhibition

Runs until May 26

GALLERY FOLD

Heima er best
Group exhibition, mixed media

Runs until May 18

Bjarni Ólafur Magnússon – There and Then

Paintings

Runs until May 25

Pórunn Bárða Björnsdóttir – Surtsey Vulkaninsel

Paintings

GERÐARSAFN (KÓPAVOGUR ART MUSEUM)

Sóley Ragnarsdóttir – Queen of Hearts

Mixed media, installation

Runs until July 21

Pór Vigfússon – Numbers, places

Site-specific installation

Runs until July 28

GERÐUR

Works of sculptor Gerður Helgadóttir

Permanent exhibition

Glerhúsið

Events

17.05–30.05.24

Concerts, comedy, movies and other happenings that defy categorisation

If you're putting something on for the general public, send us a line to: events@grapevine.is

Friday May 17
DJ ÓK: Baile Fusion
 21:00 12 Tónar
Emmsjé Gauti
 19:30 Bæjarbíó
Eva Luna
 21:00 Freyja Bistro Pub
Arabian Nights Dance Party
 20:00 Gaukurinn
Ellen & Eyþór
 20:00 Hannesarholt
Jónfrí Álbum Release Show
 21:00 Iðnó
DJ Frímann
 23:00 Kaffibarinn
School's Out For Summer Party
 20:00 Kex Hostel
XXX Rottweiler
 18:00 Laugardalshöll
Marina Fages (AR), Diego
Manatrizio+Masaya Ozaki & Glupsk
 18:30 R6013
The Love Mountain, Elsa BJE & 2
Hands b2b Hlíf
 21:00 Radar
DJ Óli Dóri
 22:00 Röntgen
When Jesus Divorced Me
 20:30 Tjarnarbíó

Saturday May 18
SAKANA+ghostorchid
 21:00 12 Tónar
DJ Sara
 21:00 Freyja Bistro Pub
Bashar Murad (PS)
 17:30 &
 20:30 Iðnó
Dúó Árðra
 15:00 Hannesarholt
The Wall – Pink Floyd Tribute Concert
 21:00 Harpa (Eldborg)
Choir Afternoon
 14:00 Harpa (Hörpuhorn)
DJ Kári
 23:00 Kaffibarinn
Inspector Spacetime
 21:00 Kex Hostel
Leila Bordreuil & Onoiko
 20:00 Mengi
Upptakarinn Series
 18:00 LEMMY
Obscure Shape, Lafontaine & Jamesendir
 21:00 Radar
Fusion Groove
 22:00 Röntgen
Marina Fages (AR), Sucks to be You
Nigel & Flaýrr
 19:00 Smekkleysa
Skratch Bastid & Cell7
 22:00 Sunset (Reykjavík)
EDITION)
When Jesus Divorced Me
 20:30 Tjarnarbíó
KROSSFEST Part II: Börn, CXVIII & More
 18:00 Völvufell 17

Sunday May 19
Soberphobia 101
 21:00 Freyja Bistro Pub
Frobenius Choir Organ Re-Inauguration Concert
 17:00 Hallgrímskirkja
Fusion Groove
 23:00 Kaffibarinn
WORSHIP Fest: Nornagal, Kastalar & Ultra Magnus
 20:00 LEMMY
KGB
 22:00 Röntgen

Monday May 20
Girls Rock Camp Togo Fundraiser
 19:00 Gaukurinn
400 Years of Sweet Torment
 20:00 Harpa (Kaldalón)
Terminal X: waves & fuel

morninggrave
 8:00 Tollhúsíð

Tuesday May 21
Bob Cluness
 21:00 Kaffibarinn
Reykjavík Poetics #11: Open Mic
 19:30 Mengi
Satanvatnið
 20:30 Tjarnarbíó

Wednesday May 22
Housekell
 21:00 Kaffibarinn
Anna Gréta & Sigurður Flosason
 20:00 Múlinn Jazzclub
Open Decks
 20:00 Radar
Vinyl Wednesday: DJ Johnny Blaze
 21:00 Röntgen

Thursday May 23
Nerd Party Night
 20:00 Gaukurinn
Maria Callista Memorial Burlesque
 20:00 Iðnó
Jónbjörn
 21:00 Kaffibarinn
MOVE Kvartett Óskars Guðjónssonar
 20:00 Mengi
Joeboxer
 21:00 Röntgen
Skrattar & Spacestation
 19:00 Smekkleysa
Satanvatnið
 20:30 Tjarnarbíó

Friday May 24
KK
 20:00 Bæjarbíó
The Love Mountain
 21:00 Freyja Bistro Pub
Johan Dalene Plays Korngold (Iceland Symphony Orchestra)
 19:30 Harpa (Eldborg)
Kjörk
 23:00 Kaffibarinn
STNY & Juno Paul
 20:00 Kex Hostel
Betonage, Creatures (UK), OB1 & More
 21:00 Radar
Glókullur
 22:00 Röntgen
Hildur
 20:00 Salurinn
Nordic Flamenco: Northern Pulse
 20:00 Tjarnarbíó



National Gallery of Iceland
 Fríkirkjuvegur 7
 The House of Collections
 Hverfisgata 15

Baráttan um gullið

Going for gold

100 ára afmæli Félags íslenskrar gullsmiða
 100th anniversary of the Association of Icelandic Goldsmiths

[listasafn.is](#)



Finnur Jónsson (1892-1993). Armband með landvættum / Bracelet with Land Spirits, 1985, LÍ-M10

Listasafn Íslands
 National Gallery of Iceland

24.4.—
 9.6.2024

Reykjavík Art Museum

One museum Three locations



Event Picks



HAM, SKRATTAR & HASAR
 Saturday May 25 – 19:00
 LEMMY
 7.900 ISK



DR. MADS GILBERT
 LECTURE ON GAZA 2024
 Monday May 27 – 20:00
 Háskólabíó – Free

Wednesday May 29 – 19:30
 Menningarhúsið Hof (Akureyri) – Free
 If, like millions of folks around the world, you have been gaping in horror and disbelief at your screens for the past seven months wondering "what the actual fuck is going on and why won't anyone stop this?" then that makes all of us. Dr. Mads Gilbert, a Norwegian doctor and prominent activist for Palestine who has seen the horrors first-hand. He is now coming to deliver the lecture "Gaza 2024: A catastrophic man-made disaster. What can we do?" in both Reykjavík and Akureyri. And we really, really need to know what we can do. RX



GIRLS ROCK CAMP TOGO
 FUNDRAISER
 Monday May 20 – 19:00
 Gaukurinn
 3.900 ISK

Organised by Læti – a non-profit in the business of empowering girls and non-binary kids to pursue music – this fundraiser sports an impressive lineup. Featuring performances by artists gugusar, RAKEL, Salóme Katrín and the talented Togolese musician Mirlinda Kuakuvi, all proceeds go towards the Girls Rock Camp in Togo, managed by Mirlinda herself. The girls in Togo need new equipment – that's where you come in. By attending, you'll help supply the camp with a brand new sound system and instruments, all while enjoying great music. Sounds like a win-win situation to me. JB

HAM are considered the godfathers of Icelandic rock music. Every now and then they will invite the younger bands to do a show with them, both to let said youngsters kiss the ring and to hang on to their own relevance. Get thyself to LEMMY for the chance to witness the emergence of Reykjavík's next fresh and exciting musical pioneers, but also to pay homage to the long lived and experienced on the scene. AJ



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Saturday May 25

Sw€€t 44
18:00 12 Tónar
Elin Hall & Magnús Jóhann
20:00 Hannesarholt
Vorblót: Katla Women's Choir
17:00 Harpa (Norðurljós)
DJ Óli Dóri
23:00 Kaffibarinn
HAM
19:00 LEMMY
Dance Marathon 2024
11:00 National Gallery of Iceland
After Eight: Ása Kolla, MARIA & KrBear
20:00 Radar
Benni B-Ruff
22:00 Röntgen
Herra Hnetusmjör Family Show
18:00 Salurinn
Nordic Flamenco: Northern Pulse
20:00 Tjarnarbió

Sunday May 26

Children of the Sun
21:00 Freyja Bistro Pub
Haukur Morthens 100th Anniversary
17:00 Harpa (Eldborg)
Choir Afternoon
13:00 Harpa (Hörpuhorn)
viibra Album Release Show
21:00 Harpa (Norðurljós)
Reykjavík Big Band
20:00 Harpa (Silfurberg)
Ingvar Lucky
21:00 Kaffibarinn
Sunday Club
20:00 Radar

Tuesday May 28

Fu Kaisha
21:00 Kaffibarinn
Pub Quiz
20:00 Röntgen

Wednesday May 29

Ingi Bjarni Skúlason
20:00 Hannesarholt
Kraftgalli DJ Set Vinyl Special
21:00 Kaffibarinn
ANNA FÁLT & IRÁ!
20:00 Mengi
Vinyl Wednesday: DJ Silja Glømmi
21:00 Röntgen

Monday May 27

Kiasmos
20:00 Gamla Bíó
Dr. Mads Gilbert: Gaza 2024 Lecture
20:00 Háskólabíó

Thursday May 30

DJ Geiri Goodshit: Bobfest
20:00 12 Tónar
Eagles Tribute Concert
20:00 Bæjarbió
Bear The Ant, Júníus Meyvant & Kári Egilsson
20:00 Iðnó
Eva Luna
21:00 Kaffibarinn
DJ Dia
21:00 Röntgen



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Music News



Laufey Performed Jimmy Fallon's Tonight Show

Music news wouldn't be complete without a mention of the indomitable Laufey. The Icelandic jazz-pop sensation featured in an episode of *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* on May 9. Planted behind the Rockefeller Centre's grand piano, Laufey was joined by a chamber orchestra as she performed a rendition of her song "Goddess" from her recent

release *Bewitched: The Goddess Edition*. Days earlier, Laufey attended the annual Met Gala, wearing a dress that probably costs as much as a small Reykjavík apartment. The artist is currently on tour, playing dates in South East Asia, the United States and Europe. JB



Iceland Airwaves Announce Emilíana Torrini Partner Event

Annual music festival Iceland Airwaves has announced the beloved Emilíana Torrini will play a special spin-off set in Harpa's Eldborg in November. The concert is a partner-event to the festival's 2024 edition, taking place after the official festival schedule is over. Following the release of her single "Let's Keep Dancing" on March 15, Emilíana announced her forthcoming album *Miss Flower* will drop June 21. Inspired by long lost letters of her friend's mother, *Miss Flower* prom-

ises to be a deeply personal album for the artist. As this is a separate event from Iceland Airwaves, a separate ticket is needed. Airwaves ticket holders receive priority for the Emilíana show as well as other discounts. Emilíana Torrini rose to prominence in the late 90s, featuring on GusGus' 1997 debut album *Polydistortion*. In addition to her fruitful solo career, she received a Grammy award for co-writing Kylie Minogue's singles "Someday" and "Slow." JB



Elín Hall Features in Cannes Festival Opening Film

Musician and actress Elín Hall is currently attending the Cannes Film Festival in France. Elín plays a role in director Rúnar Rúnarsson latest film *When The Light Breaks*, which premiered at the film festival on May 15. The film was selected as the opening to the festival's section Un Certain Regard. *When The Light Breaks* follows the story of Una, played by Elín Hall, whose life is turned upside

down. The story explores the unclear boundaries between laughter and crying, beauty and pain. Elín Hall has featured in the biographical Bubbi Morthens musical *Níu Líf* and the Alanis Morissette musical *Jagged Little Pill*, screening at the City Theatre. Her 2023 album, *heyrist í mér* won the Reykjavík Grapevine's Music Award "Album Of the Year." JB



Time Seems Long Until

Childhood friends ponder time on their debut EP *Fluid Time*

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

With more than four decades' worth of creative experience, musicians Birgir Mogensen and Sigtryggur Baldursson imbue their childhood influences into their newest project, Paddan, releasing their debut EP *Fluid Time* on May 10 via Lovitt Records.

First making each others' acquaintance on the football pitch in Kópavogur at the age of 12, Birgir and Sigtryggur soon discovered their mutual interest in music. Ultimately, they would go on to found pivotal groups in Iceland music history, serving as emissaries of Icelandic punk and new-wave with their bands Kukl and The Sugar-cubes. Now in their early 60s, the pair reflect on the nature of time on the debut offering of their new outfit Paddan.

"We were lucky to be able to follow the latest music releases, since both of our fathers travelled frequently. Sigtryggur's dad worked on flights and my dad was at sea," recalls Bir-

gir from his living room while Sigtryggur joins the conversation over video while sipping his first coffee of the day on the west coast of the United States.

Despite the seven-hour time difference, the unnatural closeness brought on by modern communication technology makes percep-

ing British bands into our listening repertoire, like Siouxsie and the Banshees, Killing Joke, of course," he trails off.

Birgir picks up when his friend left off: "It was a complete transformation at the time. Like with us, we're following more of these jazz, funk, fusion ideas from the States, which

40 years is a short amount of time when you've lived it.

tible the long-standing friendship between the two, as they reminisce their formative years through the computer screen.

"We had a pretty broad music taste," Sigtryggur's voice crackles through the laptop speakers. "We listened to everything from prog-rock like Gentle Giant and Yes, over to Santana. Then we got into jazz more and fusion."

"Then, a certain revolution takes place when we're growing up," Sigtryggur casually mentions. "When this British punk wave — or more correctly — post-punk wave came crashing. We started includ-

ing more of a technical nature. But we totally swapped over when we discovered the simplicity and the atmosphere and this less-is-more approach."

PUNK'S INFLUENCE

Birgir describes the introduction to British punk as "a new beginning. It was like starting to listen to music all over again."

Following a brief stint in the band Hattímas as teenagers, Birgir and Sigtryggur parted ways — Birgir went on to play bass in Spilafífl while Sigtryggur played drums in Þeyr. Both bands were immortalised in the

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until You've Lived It

1982 documentary *Rokk í Reykjavík*, which explored the raucous local music scene at the time. Subsequently, Birgir and Sigtryggur's paths crossed again with the formation of avant-garde post-punk band Kukl, which roped in various other *Rokk í Reykjavík* alumni including Björk Guðmundsdóttir.

Kukl's collaboration continued until Sigtryggur went on to join iconic new-wave group The Sugarcubes. It was at that point the friends' paths diverged yet again.

"In 1986, [Kukl] dissolves and this Smekkleysa group is created which ends up with The Sugarcubes. But Biggi was busy doing other things, so he didn't join that crowd directly," Sigtryggur explains. "But we've

Like the establishment of Paddan, Birgir and Sigtryggur allowed *Fluid Time* to be written naturally. Grounded in free-form improvisational methods, Paddan's debut is a beam of passion. Sticky beats underpin a chorus of atmospheric electric guitars, whose back-and-forth interaction signifies the dynamic relationship between the two.

"Sigtryggur lays it down with his grooves and then we build on top of that. The ideas that arrived were allowed to sit in the final outcome. So it's a lot of first impressions, what calls upon us. There's no larger philosophy than that behind it," explains Birgir. "We're in it for the music."

Asked about Paddan's influences

philosophical statements and ideas. "It was exclusively about playing. Listening to each other, playing together and working from that point," he mentions.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the immense creative experience of the duo, conceptual notions could not escape them. In conjunction with the album, Paddan have also released a series of music videos, acting as the visual mediator of the album's underlying concept. As the name suggests, secretly woven into the EP's fabric are conversations about the passage of time in relation to natural elements.

"We had this concept of trying to imbue each song with a specific element. Put certain visual aspects into conversation with the songs. There's the flow and the passing of time. How we perceive time," contemplates Sigtryggur. "In 'Bug,' the visuals are related to water and play with that element. It's a play on images and sound," he concludes.

"It ties to what we did musically [on *Fluid Time*]. Time is relative – 40 years is a short amount of time when you've lived it," Birgir sums up. "We're taking something that had massive influence on us 40 years ago, which is then pulled into the present when we worked on the album." ■

We're in it for the music.

always stayed in touch and it wasn't until 2017-2018 when we started working together again."

In a sense, Paddan was destined to be founded. "It was perhaps inevitable. You start talking about things, you know of one another, you mention it in passing and it becomes a part of something that suddenly pops up. Because we've planted the seeds a long time ago," says Birgir.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Born out of a slow development over the course of many years, *Fluid Time* captures the music as it came to the group. With no specific frame in mind, the duo used improvisation and musical intuition to draw up the barebones ideas that subsequently sprang to life in the studio.

– where the music might be flowing from – the pair find it difficult to pinpoint any clear connections. "Back in the day, you were obsessed with dismissing the idea of sounding like something else. There was an emphasis on editorial processes. But nowadays – when you're this old – it's more pent-up within your subconscious," Sigtryggur replies facetiously.

"What we've listened to in these last decades has brewed within us. And when we come together, something breaks out," Birgir adds.

SOUND AND PICTURE

During the early stages of the process, Birgir mentions making a conscious decision to keep the album devoid of any grand political or

Listen to *Fluid Time* on available streaming platforms, preferably while thinking about the passage of time. You can watch the videos for "Splash" and "Bug" on Lovitt Records' YouTube channel, @lovittrecords.

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Flutes Rock

The Flute In The Power Of Seven

Flute Septet Viibra Push Boundaries On Their Debut Album

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

Harnessing the power of the flute, Viibra is one of Iceland's best-kept music secrets. Comprised of seven flautists, the group was created from the close collaboration with artist Björk Guðmundsdóttir on her 2016 album Utopia. Viibra released their first single "Eyg" on May 3, following it up in quick succession with their debut album *Viibra* on May 24 via Marvaða and a release concert to boot.

Originally hand-picked by Björk to lend their woodwind expertise to her compositions, the septet went on to support the artist on her seminal Utopia and Cornucopia world tours.

The up-and-coming group of flautists, who now faces the task of branching out independently from Björk's work, consists of performers Áshildur Haraldsdóttir, Björg Brjánsdóttir, Berglind María Tómasdóttir, Dagný Marinósdóttir, Sólveig Magnúsdóttir, Steinunn Vala Pálsdóttir and Þuriður Jónsdóttir.

"When we went on tour, we immediately realised that we'd become 'the girl band,'" recounts Björg, joined by Berglind and Steinunn. "We needed a name because Björk would always introduce us at her shows. She wasn't going to name every single flute player, so the group and name were established in 2018."

Spending more or less all their free time together, it was through these adventures that Viibra's internal relationships grew, ultimately coalescing into a fully-fledged band. Given the relatively small stature of the Icelandic flute community, Viibra admits having pre-existing connections with one another.

"I taught Steinunn, for example," Berglind points out. "And there are various other connections within the group. Melkorka taught [Björg]. We encompass a wide age range. Like

Áshildur, I went to her flute concerts as a teenager. She was an idol. And then, you know, who's the teacher now?"

UNCONVENTIONAL FLUTES

When news broke that Björk would cease touring, an opportunity opened up for the seven flautists to branch out independently. During Viibra's collaboration with Björk, the septet began work on their debut album.

"We worked on this album for two years, not knowing if the tour would be over or not," Björg explains, continuing, "So it's not being released because it's over, but there's more room for us to do this now."

The music presented on their debut album *Viibra* is a collection of various works – both written by Berglind and Björg, as well as composers Bergur Þórisson, Bárá Gísladóttir, Bergrún Snæbjörnsdóttir and John McCowen.

Viibra's forthcoming album is an exploration of all things flute. Through the chaotic compositions, you can sense that both composers and performers want to push the boundaries of conventional flute playing, resulting in an experimental amalgamation of classical and contemporary motifs.

"I think it's composers going further with their ideas about the flute. It's sort of like a flute in the power of two," says Björg, quickly correcting herself, "Or flute in the power of seven."

"Although there are elements of classical flute playing, there's an inquisitive soundscape going on. There's no underpinning theme," ponders Berglind. "Except that almost all composers start with the letter B," Steinunn adds with a laugh.

OVERLAPPING ART FORMS

Hot on the heels of their upcoming release, Viibra is set to host a release concert in Harpa. Conceived during a photography session with the band's label Marvaða, the flau-

tists had not originally intended to throw a show. But, spurred on by Marvaða founder Arnbjörg Daniels-en, they eventually decided to take things further.

"I think we originally intended to throw a listening party and we were very content with that," admits Steinunn.

Featuring music performances by the band, Viibra also attest to the show being closer to an art installation. An integral part of the concert is the band's cooperation with multi-disciplinary artist and choreographer Margrét Bjarnadóttir, who worked alongside Viibra during the Cornucopia tour. "We can't really talk about what we're doing without mentioning Margrét," says Berglind.

"We have this common language with Margrét which has developed over the years. It's unconventional to have this music prepared alongside a whole show with movement. It becomes a sort of installation, too. It's very unusual and we couldn't have been able to do it without building this for six years with Margrét," says Björg.

While including physical movement in their sets is not a novel concept for the band – after all, they were heavily involved in the Cornucopia stage production – it is not in their DNA.

"In the world where we come from, you just show up and play. This won't be a dance piece per se, but it's just as important how we play and how we move around the stage," Berglind explains.

According to Björg, guests can expect "something they've never experienced before." Berglind admits to not fully knowing what to expect. "It's such an unusual mix – this music, the collaboration with Margrét. It's close to some sort of a theatre piece," she says. ■

Listen to "Eyg" on available streaming platforms. Viibra's debut album *Viibra* is out May 24. The band will perform at Harpa in celebration of their release on May 26. Tickets are available at harpa.is.



Track By Track Love, Loss, Mermaids

Alternative-pop artist BLOSSI talks his debut album

WORDS BLOSSI
IMAGE Supplied by artist

Setting his course towards Icelandic pop stardom, BLOSSI is the moniker of socialite and art student Álfgrímur Aðalsteinsson. His debut EP *Le Blossi* was released on May 1, exhibiting songs of love and loss. The album's backdrop conjures images of Mediterranean beaches where attraction fills the amorous atmosphere. Have you ever fallen in love with a mermaid? Or been at a crossroads with a potential lover while surrounded by the deafening sounds of sirens? BLOSSI aims to capture those moments, supported by roaring alternative-pop production and poetic lyrics. With KUSK and Óviti serving as producers and co-songwriters, *Le Blossi* is a boisterous pop gem, perfect before, after, or during a night out on the town.

ALLT SEM ÉG VIL

This was the first song I wrote with my producers and long-time collaborators KUSK and Óviti. We had a lot of fun in the studio writing it, running with the inspiration of falling in love with a mermaid. It's a song about mystery and magic, and my favourite on the album.

HJARTABLÓÐ

This track came to us the fastest, seemingly writing itself. It's got a fun beat to it, but the lyrics that came to the song are about two lovers getting lost in and consumed by each other.

SÍRENUR

This is definitely the poppiest song on the album. It's about crossing paths with a love interest in the night, but not being able to express to them how you feel, meaning you both continue on your separate ways, and the feeling of loss associated with that. The chorus talks about being surrounded by sirens, describing this feeling of being overwhelmed after this experience by the sounds and sights of the night.

DA-AN-SA

This song is essentially part two of "Sírenur" and serves as the outro to the album. It talks about keeping going amid the loss of the one that got away. It's a song for dancing and I feel it ties up the album's story well. ■

LE BLOSSI

"Le Blossi" is the title track of my debut EP because it feels like a good introduction to the tracklist itself and my soundscape as an artist. The song is essentially a love song with the lyrics repeating "ég og þú" (me and you) in the final chorus showing how encapsulating and sometimes isolating love can be with someone or something. ■



United By Music

A Letter To RÚV From The Iceland-Palestine Association

Was Iceland's participation in Eurovision really worth it?

WORDS Salvör Gullbrá Þórarins dóttir & Yousef Ingi Tamimi
IMAGE Alma Bengtsson

the song to Malmö, RÚV was given another opportunity to align with the desires of the majority of Icelanders by abstaining from participation. They brushed it off, sending eager repeat Eurovision contender Hera Björk to Malmö without Ásdís.

And for what? Iceland ended up in last place among all participants, while RÚV witnessed unprecedented low Eurovision viewership. Adding to the irony, while Iceland struggled through the semi-finals in Malmö, President of Iceland Guðni Th. Jóhannesson opted to attend a counter-Eurovision concert in support of the Palestinian cause rather than tune in to his country's lacklustre performance.

some fairytale bubble untouched by reality. Genocide isn't a footnote; it's a glaring geopolitical issue that can't be swept under the rug. Eurovision always was, is and will be political, whether we like it or not.

RÚV's stance was nothing short of selfish. Turning a blind eye to human rights violations, it arrogantly presumed to dictate how Palestine should pursue its fight for freedom. The Icelandic delegation's patronising notion of "talking it through" with Israel reeks of European powers' condescending attempts to gaslight the global south. History will not treat our silence kindly. It will judge us harshly for allowing Israel to perpetuate 75 years of suppression,

Eurovision always was, is and will be political, whether we like it or not.

So, was it all worth it? RÚV's reputation has taken a hit, the delegation's credibility has gone down the drain and companies have shied away from advertising slots, fearing association with Israel's genocidal warfare. RÚV had a chance to take a stand for human rights, but instead turned a blind eye.

The tired excuse that Eurovision isn't political doesn't hold water anymore – everything from acts like Rybak to controversies involving t.A.T.u. proves otherwise. It's time to stop pretending that Eurovision exists in

systematically erasing a nation while building its empire on the graves of innocent children. We must use this moment to galvanise support for human rights and accountability. It's not enough to merely condemn injustice; we must actively work towards preventing it.

Let's turn our outrage into action, advocating for policies and actions that promote justice and equality for all. Because ultimately, the true worth of our actions lies not in the past, but in the impact they have on shaping a better future for generations to come. ■



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Dranks

Cocktail-Hopping In Re

A whirlwind tour of Reykjavík's cocktail scene in four easy steps

WORDS Ragnar Egilsson
IMAGES Joana Fontinha

run the gamut from "The Last Word" to "Bosom Caresser" (the revival seems to have skipped the second one). The crest of the cocktail wave is behind us, but we are now looking at a far more democratic and accessible landscape, where fresh ingredients, proper technique and herbal tinctures have entrenched themselves in the culture.

ably going to have a fig in it and your waiter will probably have a graduate degree and speak four languages, the bastard.

The lounge area in Apótek is as good a place as any to start, as the natural light and high ceilings really compliment your eyes. Your hair is still in place and you can still locate most of the clothes you left the

It went down smooth and my groin has never been better.

Whether you're just passing through or you're a regular person about town, we've put together this blueprint for a four-stop cocktail crawl through downtown Reykjavík for your enjoyment.

STAGE 1: APÓTEK
RESTAURANT
AUSTURSTRÆTI 16

Look at you getting all fancy on a Saturday, lounging away in your good shirt, collar popped like you're on a second date. Your drink is prob-

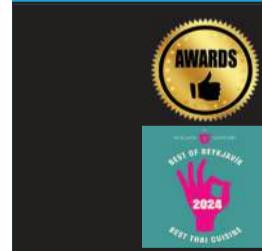
house with. This is good, as the ultra-attentive staff at Apótek want to get the drink into your hand and the cash out of your pocket, and for that to happen you need to be wearing pants.

On the first stop of the night, I went for the Black Death Negroni. It arrives in a cute little old-timey medicine bottle, a reference to the pharmacy that stood at this location a century ago. The little brown bottle, the kind that would have held a shot of arsenic to treat your groin blisters back in the day, is now a

Cocktails have never been as elite as they're made out to be. Sure, you have F. Scott Fitzgerald mixing himself a gin rickey at Summit Terrace but then it's also Hulk Hogan leg dropping a piña colada. Even the names of prohibition cocktails



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Reykjavík

dainty ready-made blend of Icelandic Brennivín (which used to be marketed under the name of Black Death) a few drops of absinth and the usual negroni business. Brennivín is a tricky ingredient to blend into a cocktail due to its intensive caraway flavour, but Apótek has figured out a way to prove all the nay-sayers wrong. It went down smooth and my groin has never been better.

sister bar. Where our first stop was bright and airy, Tipsy boasts a more nocturnal lighting scheme (seriously, you may need to crack your phone out to read the menu). Tipsy will be familiar enough to any cocktail fiend, a corner bar playing up a kitschy, speak-easy vibe, with vested bartenders, pink curtains and pink-ish drinks. The bartenders flirt with adventurous ingredients, but their

sic gin martini to take advantage of the veteran bartenders. These folks know their way around the cocktail classics and it showed. Delightful.

STAGE 3: JUNGLE AUSTURSTRÆTI 9

This second floor walkup, just opposite the only damn liquor store in downtown Reykjavík, has recently zhuzhed up their seating and the place is looking as fresh as ever. This is the perfect spot for the third drink of the night, when you're welcoming a comfy spot to really enjoy that mid-date lull in the conversation by sinking your butt into a leather sofa and doing a little people-watching (who are we kidding, we were swiping through videos of red pandas eating watermelons).

Jungle is constantly renewing their roster of innovative cocktails, giving regulars the sense that these folks are truly in it for the love of the game. For the third outing, we went for the Bonita Applebaum, which despite the green apples and whisky, kind of tastes like a fresher rum in vanilla cola with a longer aftertaste.

For something a little denser and sweeter, we recommend the Jungle Club, which was probably intended as a mashup between Pegu Club and Jungle Bird, but is all its own thing with a nostalgic, blood orange squash flavour.

STAGE 4: SKREID LAUGAVEGUR 4

making more than one appearance each. We decided to stay in the safe confines of pre-prohibition American cocktails and ordered a Last Word. At Skreið, it's called "Síðustu orð Espelette" and is served with a dash of espelette chilli liqueur. This is not a place to crowd, but perfect for a final dash of this fresh gin-based favourite.

The bartenders flirt with adventurous ingredients, but their signature drinks still manage to be far more approachable than ingredients like eucalyptus or red cabbage would have you believe.

STAGE 2: TIPSY HAFNARSTRÆTI 1-3

A very recent addition to the cocktail scene in Reykjavík is Apótek's

signature drinks still manage to be far more approachable than ingredients like eucalyptus or red cabbage would have you believe.

This time around I stuck to a clas-

You can move on to something sensible, like a glass of Côtes du Rhône at Apéro Vínbar, or trudge home to a warm glass of milk.

After being privy to a string of positive recommendations, we decided to try out the new-ish pintxos restaurant on Laugavegur. Luckily, we were able to squeeze into one of the five or so seats in the upstairs bar — see kids, it pays to start your night earlier. The drinks don't veer too far from the Spanish-speaking world, with Pedro Ximénez and Havana Club

What better way to conclude your cocktail hop than with a peppery last word. What you do now is up to you. You can move on to something sensible, like a glass of Côtes du Rhône at Apéro Vínbar, or trudge home to a warm glass of milk and whichever soul-crushing crime docuseries you have lined up on your streaming service of choice. ■

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Travel Feature

Good Ol' Golden Circle

Taking another spin on the classic travel route

WORDS Catharine Fulton
IMAGES Art Bicnick & Catharine Fulton

Wether you live in Iceland, you've visited Iceland before, or you're simply Googled "Iceland" in anticipation of one day travelling here, the probability is high that you've heard of the Golden Circle. The circuitous route just a stone's throw from the capital area delivers travellers to a trio of classic attractions: Gullfoss waterfall, the Geysir geothermal area and Þingvellir national park.

It had admittedly been a minute since I had done the full Golden Circle, so when I learned my father, his wife and a couple friends of theirs would be stopping over in Iceland for the first time in a long time, I called up the Grapevine's friends at Go Car Rental and mapped a route to take them on a classic DIY day trip.

UGH, WEATHER

When the day of our road trip arrived, the forecast did not bode well for an entirely enjoyable journey. Dark grey clouds loomed over Reykjavík and a peek at Vedur.is confirmed we wouldn't be driving toward anything dramatically different.

But our eight-seater van was stocked with snacks and water bottles, my kids were hell bent on playing hooky and the majesty of Icelandic nature was sure to shine even in the dreariest circumstances. And so we were off, determined to at least get an early start before the rain began. Out of Reykjavík, over Hellisheiði and down the mountain

into Hveragerði and we were still dry. So far so good.

THE FIRST STOP

Driving along route 35, I gave my passengers an option. "We're approaching the Kerið volcanic crater a short ways up the road," I announced to the van, surely putting professional tour guides to shame. "It's a nice walk around the rim, does anyone want to stop here before going on to Geysir?"

Silence. Then a "nah, I don't think so."

And so Geysir would, indeed, be the first stop of the day. (to anyone reading this, I do recommend a stop at Kerið – it's a pretty spot.)

While the collective level of excitement was low at the prospect of visiting a crater, interest in the Geysir geothermal area was higher. The

piece de resistance, of course, is Strokkur (the Great Geyser itself hasn't erupted for several years). So we secured a spot along the rope barrier circling the geyser's azure blue pool and watched and waiting as the water rose slightly, then receded. Then it rose ever so slightly again and receded. Then the slight rise formed a massive bubble and a mighty column of water shot into the sky as we all oohed and aahed at the site.

Back to the van.

THE NEXT STOP

Back on route 35, with all sexagenarians and children accounted for and buckled in, we were off to Gullfoss. After seeing water shooting into the air, seeing water falling down a cliff was sure to be a thrill.

Gullfoss is always a treat to visit, and that was especially true on a gloomy

After seeing water shooting into the air, seeing water falling down a cliff was sure to be a thrill.

highlight of the area is, of course, Strokkur, the reliable geyser that erupts every five minutes on average, but walking the cobblestone path to Strokkur first brings visitors past a handful of other geothermal attractions. There's Litli-Geysir, a bubbling puddle sending billowing steam into the air, a series of bubbling mud pits and some old concrete structure that is steaming. I don't know what that concrete structure is or was at some point in its life, but it adds a certain something to the landscape that I appreciate.

day in early May when there were shockingly few other people there. The rain was still holding off and so we enjoyed the falls from the lookout point on the same level as the restaurant and gift shop and then ventured down the stairs – how many stairs there are, we couldn't agree on since we all came to different tallies (if you know, please enlighten us) – to see the chute up close and personal.

It's genuinely surprising how the experience of Gullfoss changes as you

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walk along the path that skirts the canyon and delivers you to the rocky outcrop next to the rushing water. The view of the multi-tiered waterfall and its enormous canyon changes every few metres. It's legit beautiful. Plus, I didn't spy anyone stepping over safety ropes or being obnoxious while I was there, so I could enjoy the scenery without rage.

LAST STOP

Though we had been lucky with the weather thus far – it was dreary, sure, but it hadn't rained – our good fortune was about to change. As we entered Þingvellir national park and reduced our speed to the posted 50 km/h (much to the chagrin of the Land Rover behind me), the rain began to fall. Hard. It's a fun experience, crawling along through craggy fields and past what

are probably worthwhile lookout points during drier times while heavy rain beats the roof of a van, the windshield wipers work in overdrive, the kids in the third row belt out the entire soundtrack of Hamilton, and an old man sleeps in the front passenger seat beside you. These are the family memories I will cherish.

When we finally made it to the Þingvellir visitor centre, I was genuinely surprised that my passengers were interested in getting out of the van to try to take in the view over Almannagjá, the gorge marking the edge of the North American tectonic plate. But they did. We all got soaked to the bone, but we speed walked that semi-circular boardwalk delivering a vantage point over the park. It turns out Þingvellir is beautiful in all weather. Even though it was cold and wet, it was worth the stop.

HOMeward

Back in the van and with the volume on Hamilton reduced by popular request, we headed back to Reykjavík. The rain stopped almost as soon as we passed through the gates marking our departure from the national park. Classic. But it would be nice to give the wipers a rest for a while.

Though the weather could have been better, spending a laid back day driving around the Golden Circle was a treat, giving me the opportunity to reacquaint myself with the popular tourist route and to make some new memories with visiting family and friends. ■

A massive thanks to Go Car Rental for furnishing some sweet wheels. Rent your ride at gocarrental.is



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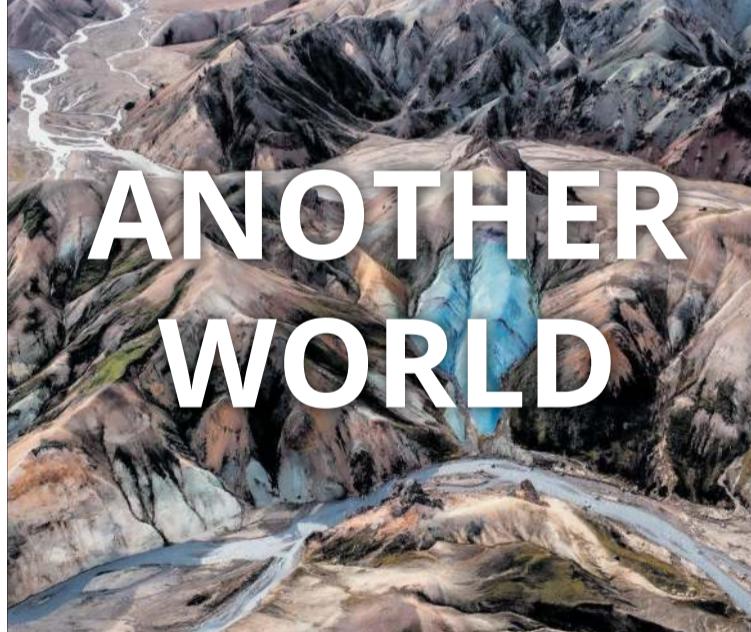
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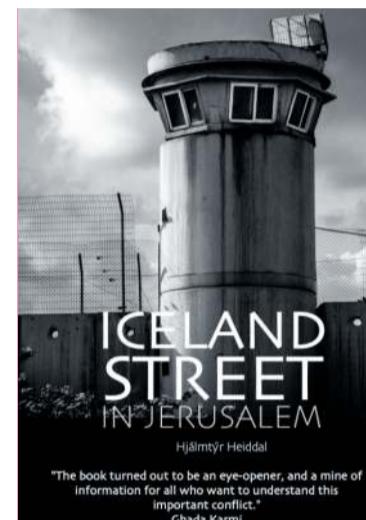
Shopping

The Grapevine's Summer Shopping Bag

Sometimes you've got to treat yourself

WORDS Catharine Fulton
IMAGES The Internet

It's finally spring and we should be out enjoying life. It's a great time to toss on your keffiyeh, hoist your protest sign and hit the streets in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Occupy public spaces, make noise, make life uncomfortable. If, between social justice actions, you're in the mood for some retail therapy, we've put together this shopping bag of some of the items we're enjoying or coveting of late. So download the No Thanks app and shop responsibly.



1



2



6



7



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3



4



5



8

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2. Original Painting by Julia Mai Linnea Maria
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3. Swim Trunks from BAHNS
Available from KIOSK, Grandagarður 35
13,900 kr.

4. Whale Fluke Necklace in Seabed Blue
Available from svartbysvart & friends, Klapparstígur 29
6,200 kr.

5. Ecru Sunglasses by Chimi
available from Andrá, Laugavegur 16
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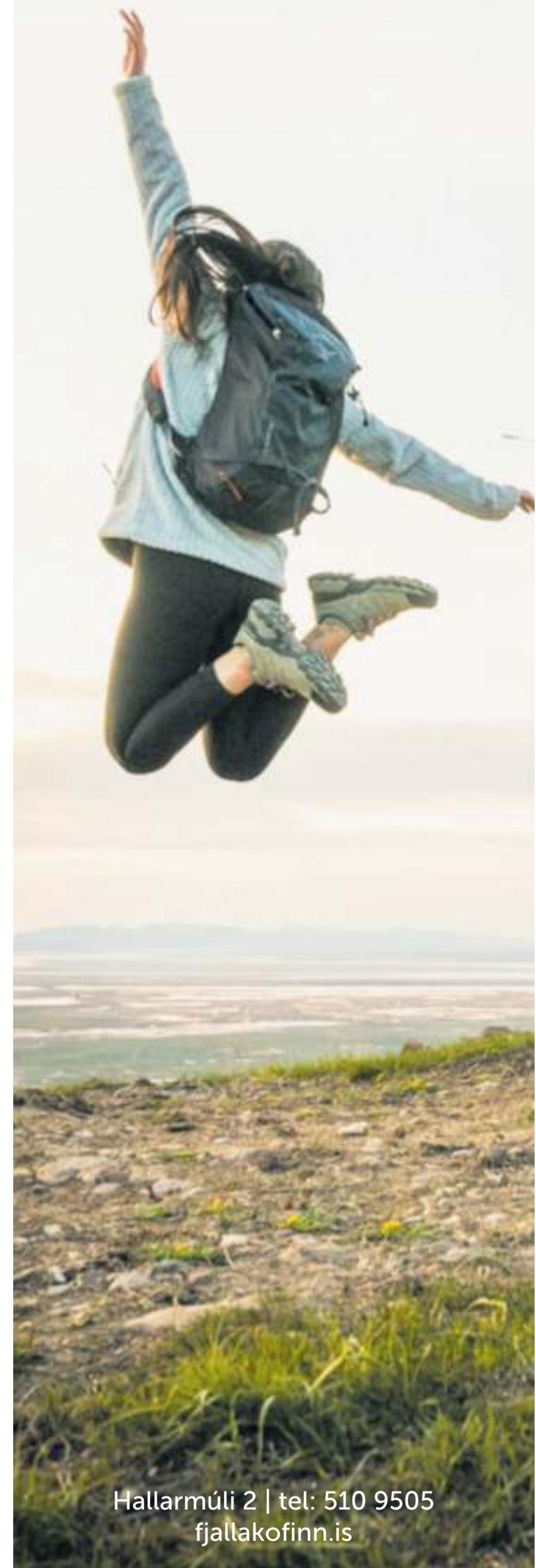
6. Þrefaldir Blómalokkar Earrings by Hlín Reykdal
Available from KIOSK, Grandagarður 35
15,900 kr.

7. Captain Fawcett's Private Stock Beard Balm
Available from Kormákur & Skjöldur, Kjörgarður, Laugavegur 59
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8. The Icelandic Children's Book Box
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OUTDOOR STORE
READY FOR AN ADVENTURE?





Islanders

Prints, Dreams And A Rusty Old Van

Freshly screen printed art just for you

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGE Joana Fontinha

One day early in May, I found myself in a random parking lot in Gerði, searching for an old van. There it was, drawing me closer like a magic chest. Bright green on the outside with red stripes and details, it could easily be mistaken for an ice cream truck. But step inside and the colours become even more vibrant. The walls are adorned with hand-made prints. Jars of paint line the shelves, waiting to be mixed. This is Brumm Brumm.

CREATIVITY HITS THE ROAD

The story of how mobile print studio Brumm Brumm emerged begins with Mai Shirato, who moved to Iceland from Japan to study fashion design in 2009, and Reykjavík-local and graphic designer Atli Rúnar Bender.

In an unexpected turn of events, Mai, then unfamiliar with Iceland, met a member of Icelandic hip-hop band Quarashi while they were touring in Tokyo. This sparked an

interest in Icelandic culture and language to such an extent that she soon found herself surrounded by the Icelandic community while living in Tokyo in the early 2000s. The rest, as they say, is history.

The concept is simple – we can travel to different places and also show the process to people.

Mai now calls Iceland home and, together with her partner, agrees that raising kids in Iceland is much better and less stressful, despite the endless wait for their spot in kindergarten.

Professionally involved in their respective creative fields for years – Mai in textiles and Atli in printing – the couple had long dreamt of starting a little side project together.

"Atli has been interested in screen printing and wanted to make a small studio for himself," says Mai.

The idea to start a studio on wheels

struck the duo during one of their camping trips. "We often go camping with a big family tent and we would see many campers at the campsite, especially the old types," Mai explains. "We thought this was very romantic. We were talking and

The big push to get the job done came when the pair applied for a grant to participate in Reykjavík's annual Menningarnótt festival in 2023 – suddenly they had a deadline to work towards. This got the ball rolling. After Menningarnótt came Ljósanótt (Night of Lights) in Keflavík, but then, Atli shrugs, "It became winter and it was too cold to be working outside."

PRINTING ON THE ROAD

"The concept is simple – we can travel to different places and also show the [screen printing] process to people," Mai explains.

While screen-printed artworks are readily available in stores or online, how many have actually witnessed the process behind it? Atli, who has been interested in this unique method of creating images for years, guides me through the process. "You mix colours by hand and transfer each of them into a separate frame. You build the colours up one frame at a time," he explains. In the past, silk was stretched across the frames, but it has since been swapped for synthetic materials like polyester.

"It takes time; it's not just pressing a button on a computer," Atli says. "There's a lot of mistakes," but they are just part of the process, he admits.

Creators agree that seeing a print being made in front of you creates a special appreciation for the art form. Not having to pay rent for the space is another huge benefit for the Brumm Brumm team. The simplicity of screen printing doesn't require a big studio space, but the camper van's opportunities are still limited – the bigger the print, the more space you need. When the need to create larger prints arises, the couple sometimes turns to a studio space to which Atli has access.

"This is one of the oldest techniques of making art," says Mai. "And our car is old – it's over 30 years old. We're not very modern people."

CELEBRATING THE EVERY-DAY

All the illustrations sold at Brumm Brumm are crafted by the couple – some by Atli, others by Mai. The inspiration behind the Brumm Brumm prints is the idea of showcasing simple, everyday objects from



Icelandic life.

"We like to choose objects that haven't changed their shape or design much. Icelandic people are so proud of Icelandic products," says Mai, providing an example. "When people go to a summer house or camping, they wake up, have coffee with some milk and maybe a kleina."

The Brumm Brumm prints depict exactly that – here's a carton of Nýmjólk that can be found in virtually any Icelandic fridge; Kókómjólk, the beloved chocolate milk whose slight design change once sparked a nation-wide discussion; or Pylsusin-nep, the quintessential Icelandic hot dog mustard.

As Mai shows me one of the freshly made milk prints, she recalls a peculiar order just before Christmas. "One woman contacted us asking if it is possible to order a 70 x 100 centimetre poster of Nýmjólk because her father drinks two litres of it every day." A perfect gift for someone's milk-loving dad in an oversized format? Brumm Brumm said yes.

Continuing their celebration of everyday Iceland, the pair is also working on a new series that will

depict Icelandic flowers in different pots – from lupines that will soon lend their vibrant purple hue to Iceland's roadsides to violet and white clovers one can find in any backyard.

We like to choose objects that haven't changed their shape or design much.

Mai infuses the posters with a dash of Japanese style and culture – the distinct simplicity and vibrant colours draw inspiration from her heritage. Some of their projects also feature subjects closely tied to Japan, such as traditional milk or sake bottles.

REALITY CHECK

As the project is still shy of its first anniversary, things are slowly taking shape in the van. The couple dreams of joining more pop-up events throughout the year and maybe even hosting an open house for Christmas.

Beyond the cosy embrace of their camper van studio, the Brumm

Brumm founders juggle day jobs, family time with kids and hobbies. Mai spends a couple of days a week working for a prep kitchen in Grandi, while Atli manages Íslensk Grafík print studio on Tryggvagata and

works night shifts at an elderly care home. Yet, despite their busy schedules, they find time for their artistic passions whenever they can. "We just do it when we have time," Atli shrugs. "We go somewhere, like for a picnic at Ellíðaárdalur and we're printing at the same time." Now that the sun is out, people are more open and curious to peek into the bright green mobile print studio, ask questions and see the posters being made. Chances are, Brumm Brumm will roll into your neighbourhood. Keep an eye out. ■

Explore screen printed art at brumm.is and [@brummbrumm_rvk](https://www.instagram.com/brummbrumm_rvk)

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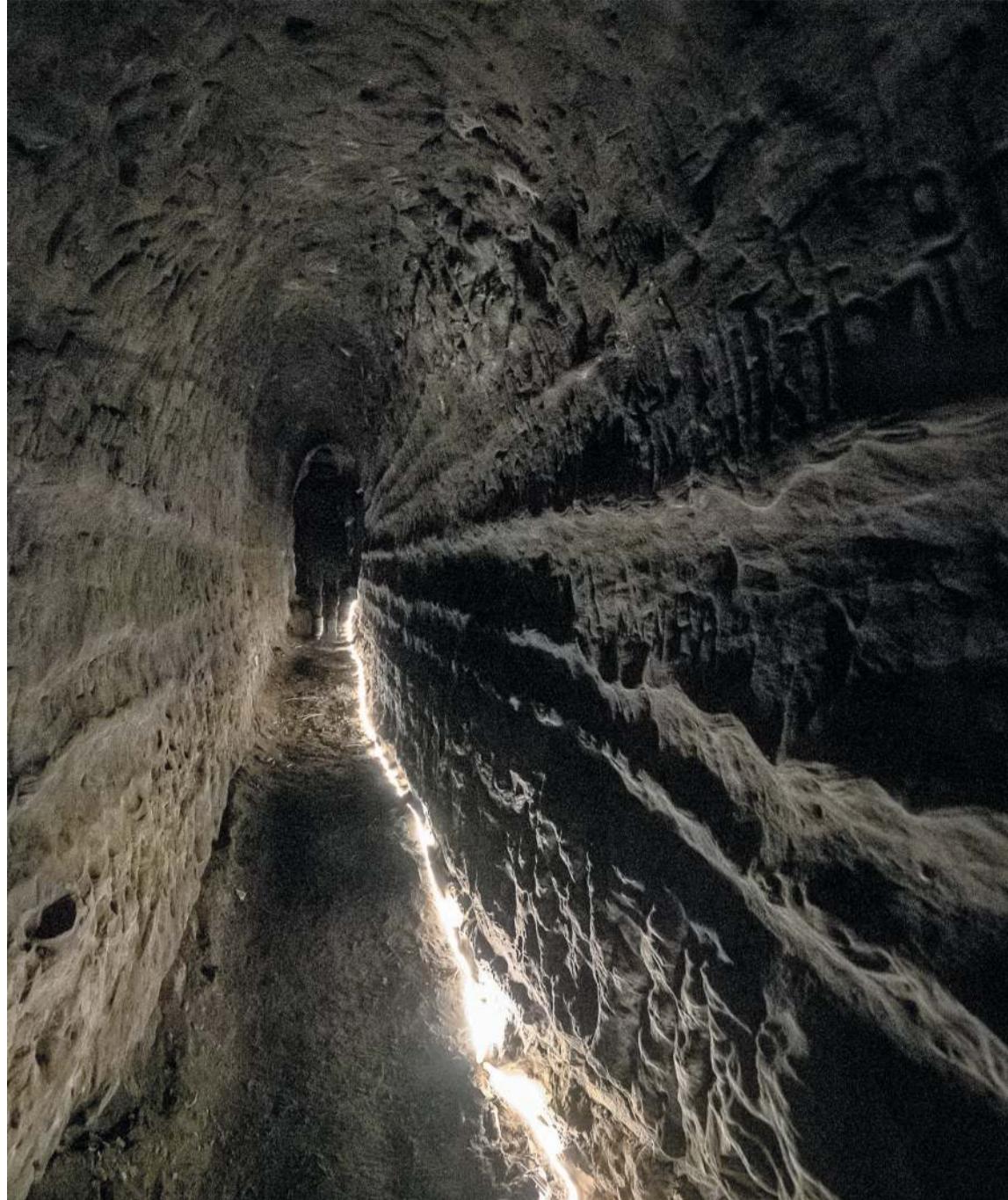
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Musings

The Beast of Búrfellsgjá

Just when you thought it was safe to explore nature...

WORDS Charlie Winters
IMAGE Art Bicnick

tourists. Here I came upon a stone sheep pen built against a crag. Upon investigation I found a forgotten housing structure, its walls intermingling with the roof of the rock face. Mold, moss and plants grow along the top as the ceiling leaked delicious cave water. No beast could live here, it could never afford rent in this deluxe flat. In this economy? I don't think so. I must go on, to the top of the volcano.

After a long and sweaty journey, I reach the summit and gaze upon the disaster whose effects still haunt the

On all fours I began to crawl into the depths of the Earth, the path only illuminated by the flashlight on my phone (don't do this, this was fucking stupid, I had three people with me making sure I could get out). With each trepid movement I (quite literally) slammed my head against the ceiling. The cavernous tunnel which I had now entered went on for a staggering, mind-shattering, incomprehensible five meters... there was nothing in there, nothing but frozen mud. I crawled out defeated. Had I imagined the beast? Was there nothing at Búrfellsgjá?

No one believes me, but I know what I saw in the dark. It was at Búrfellsgjá, the moss-covered lava field turned hiking trail not far from the city; a place where once peaceful shepherds slept with milkmaids in the warm-ish Icelandic summer sun.

I veered off the trail. Peering into the darkness, I saw it — and it saw me. That day I fled, but today I return, camera in hand, to capture a picture of that beast, the beast of Búrfellsgjá.

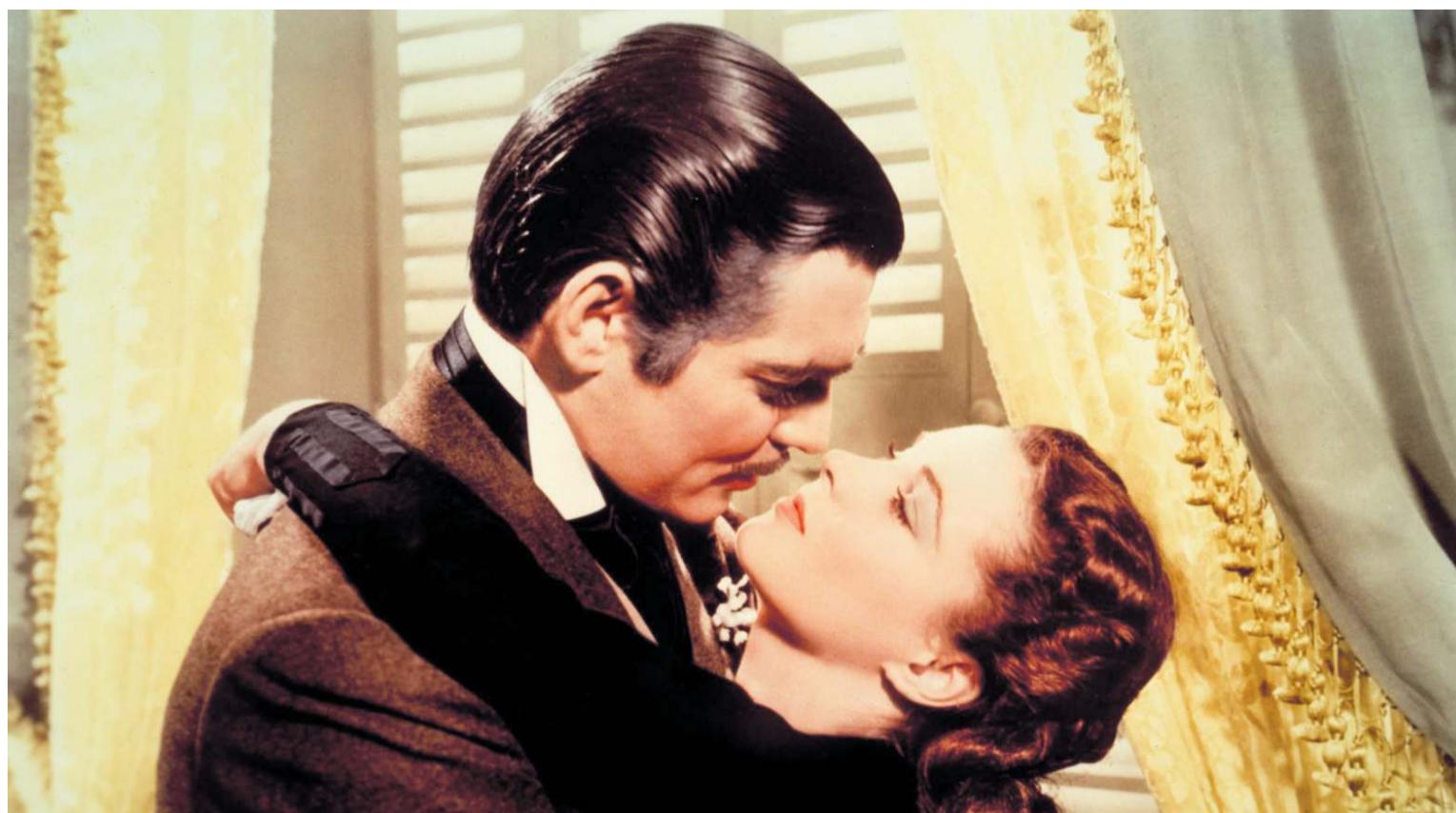
Búrfellsgjá is a seemingly innocuous hiking trail. Its accessible parking, nearby archaeological site and horse riding trail make it a popular spot to visit. But I was here on a mission, so to the hiking trail, I went. The path led me through 8,000-year-old lava channels peppered by empty Hraun wrappers and picnicking

nation: the aluminum plant. It was right there! I could see it. I hate the aluminum plant. But nope, no way the creature lives up here. Perhaps down was the way to go.

The caves and ravines that tear apart the landscape are dark, with snow still crusting at the base even in these summer months. I find the perfect cave alongside the trail. Just flat and wide enough for me to squeeze my fat ass through. Caving enthusiasts might scoff at me for referring to anything in Búrfellsgjá as a "cave" but as a city slicker who literally unconsciously mouthed the phrase "Perfect Minecraft base location" at the sight of it, I had already set the bar so very low. Plus, where else would a cryptid live?

As I began my return journey, the ravines still clawed at my mind, what if.... What if it was down there? I had to know. But I couldn't do it with others watching. So, as night fell, I returned to the holes. I approached the corner of a ravine and peered into the depths. Then the ground gave way.

So yeah, I'm stuck in a ravine. Good news, though: I found the monster — or, well, monsters. There's six other tourists here with me. We all did the same dumb thing and decided to check out the holes. Be careful around the holes, guys, and remember, always stay on the trail. Now can someone call search and rescue? I need a strong hunk in uniform to get me out of here. ■



Horoscopes

Austentatious Predictions on Love

Will you swoon or sink in the month ahead? It's all in the stars.

WORDS Charlie Winters &
Catherine Magnúsdóttir
IMAGE The Reykjavík Grapevine

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single star sign in possession of good fortune must be in want of romantic advice. As experts of love, here's how we think you will fare this summer season as the grand ball approaches.



CAPRICORN
(December 22 – January 19)

A mother hen should keep all her chicks in order. Your daughters will be acting less than couth and the family honour will hang in the balance. You must act quickly and get them all married off... or else.



Aquarius
(January 20 – Feb 18)
You want to marry for love? Silly child. Think of your position! Your family's expectations. The inferiority of their birth by rank! You'll sully our name, Aquarius, if you continue on this path.



PISCES
(February 19 – March 20)
While there can be no question as to the speed of your wit, the quality, however, leaves much to be desired. Pisces, you must learn to hold your tongue, or you'll never find a suitable match.



ARIES
(March 21 – April 19)
All manner of esteemed guests will positively swoon as you preen your newest war scars. Careful Major Aries, not everyone can handle such a powerful aura.



TAURUS
(April 20 – May 20)
You may pride yourself on many enviable qualities, such as your croquet skills, but it is beneficial to remember that when attempting to court it isn't about winning the game as much as it is about winning their heart.



GEMINI
(May 21 – June 20)
Worry not, Gemini, eventually you will come of age and you will be thrust into the fastidious duel that is courtship. Keep your wit at the ready and perhaps we will see you on the other side.



CANCER
(June 21 – July 22)
A heart of gold with no head to match, Cancer. This month, you will have no difficulty finding a mate if you seek within your own class. Social hierarchies are merciless.



LEO
(July 23 – August 22)
Leo, heartbreak is hard to heal. This month, you will spend plenty of time by the ocean, looking upon the waves, wondering where it all went wrong. It will get better, Leo, and spinsterhood isn't all that bad.



VIRGO
(August 23 – September 22)
Your precise and analytical mind is much suited to matters of business, yet the constantly changing social dynamics of a ballroom are a nightmare to navigate. Stick to the corners Virgo, perhaps you'll find another like yourself.



LIBRA
(September 23 – October 22)
You are widely known and admired for your charm, but we warned! Vultures circle their prey for longer than you'd think. Your social and diplomatic skills will be put to the test and failure means you'll have to move to... the country. One shudders to imagine.



SCORPIO
(October 23 – November 21)
Nobility are drawn to you like moths to a burning flame. But Scorpio, your rakish ways have often left those who come too close burned by your scorn. If you keep this up, you'll be left with neither support nor sums. Loneliness is its own curse.



SAGITTARIUS
(November 22 – December 21)
I know you're optimistic, Sagittarius. But you have no money and no prospects. You're already a burden to your parents. I'm frightened for you. It isn't certain if you'll be offered marriage again!

Well, we hope your dance cards are full now and your hearts have found their perfect match. If not, we are hardly to blame, it will be you who choose to wear that appalling garb. Find a new tailor and your reputation might yet still be salvageable. ■



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Potent Quotables

There was the law of “big judgement” – you could kill someone for having a baby out of wedlock.

Iceland is the backdrop for the video game Island of Winds on page 10

Palestine is the test for all those who say they support human rights and freedom.

Catharine Fulton explores the Free Palestine movement in Iceland on pages 12-14

They're coming to Patreksfjörður even though they're really supposed to be in Cannes.

Learn about the remotely located documentary film festival Skjaldborg on page 18

40 years is a short amount of time when you've lived it.

Childhood friends and The Sugarcubes alumni reflect on their latest project Paddan on pages 26-27

Eurovision always was, is and will be political, whether we like it or not.

Read the Iceland-Palestine Association's strongly worded open letter to RÚV on page 29

It went down smooth and my groin has never been better.

Ragnar Egilsson drinks his way to a cocktail conclusion on pages 30-31

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